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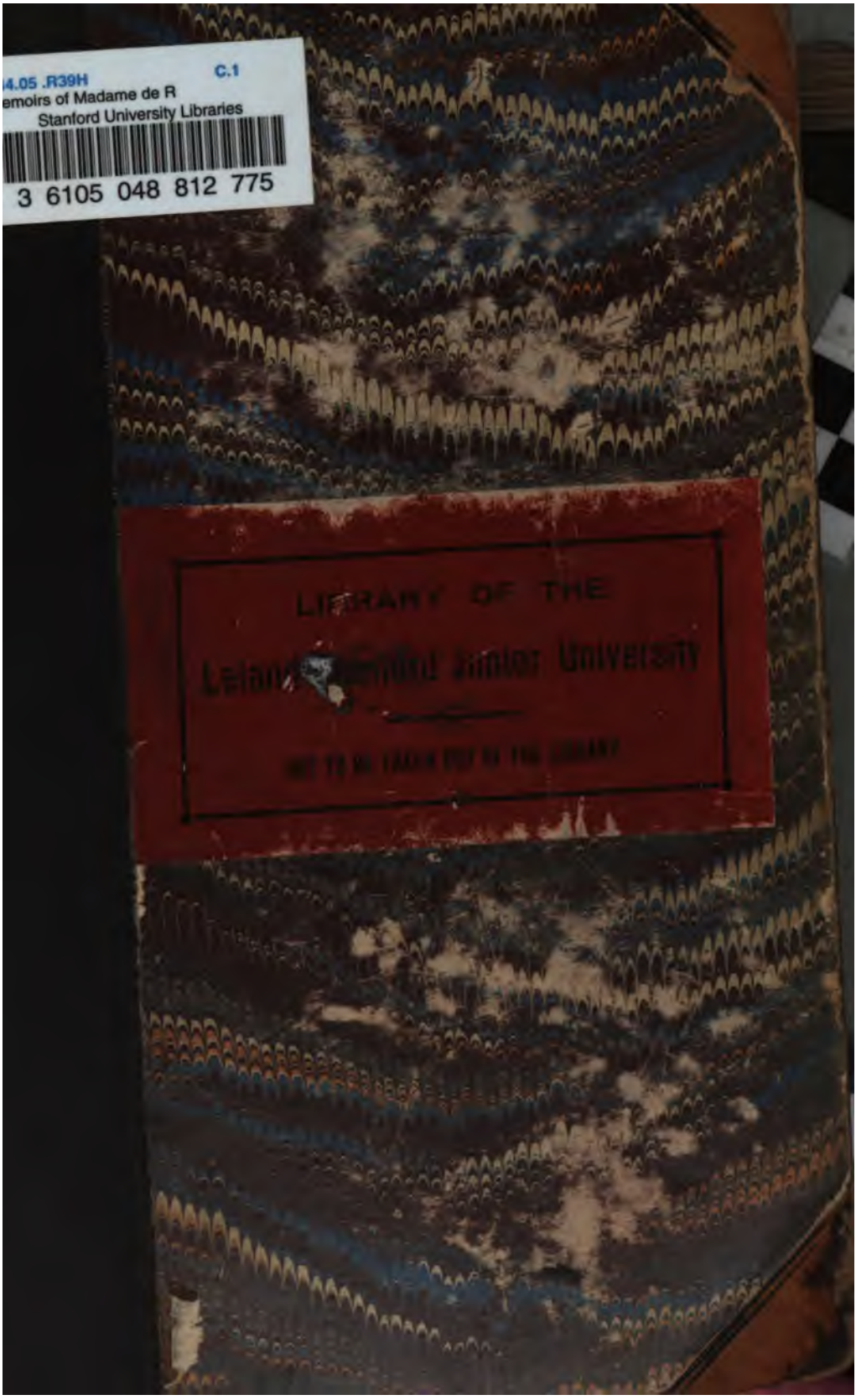
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MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME DE RÉMUSAT.

1802—1808.

PUBLISHED BY HER GRANDSON,

M. PAUL DE RÉMUSAT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

MRS. CASHEL HOEY AND MR. JOHN LILLIE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

My father's bequest to me of the manuscript of the Memoirs of my grandmother, who was Lady-in-Waiting to the Empress Josephine, was accompanied by an injunction that I should publish them. He regarded those Memoirs as extremely important to the history of the first portion of the present century; and had frequently contemplated publishing them himself, but he was always hindered from doing so, either by his other duties, by his many labours, or by certain scruples. He deferred the moment at which the public was to be made acquainted with these valuable reminiscences of an epoch—recent, indeed, but respecting which the present generation is so ill-informed—precisely because that epoch was recent, and many persons who had been involved in its important events were still living. Although the author of these Memoirs cannot be accused of intentional malice, she passes judgment upon persons and things very freely. A certain consideration, which is not always consonant with the

verity of history, is due, not only to the living, but to the children of the dead. Years passed on, however, and the reasons for silence diminished with the lapse of time.

About 1848, my father would perhaps have allowed this manuscript to see the light; but the Empire and the Emperor returned, and then the book might have been regarded either as a piece of flattery tendered to the son of Queen Hortense, who is very gently handled by the writer, or as a direct insult, on other points, to his dynasty. Circumstances had thus given a polemical character—an aspect of actuality, as the phrase goes—to a work which should be regarded as a candid and impartial history, the narrative of a remarkable woman, who relates with simple sincerity that which she witnessed at the Court and during the reign of the Emperor, and who records her estimate of him as an individual. In any case, it is probable that the book would have been prosecuted, and its publication interdicted. I may add, lest any should consider these reasons insufficient, that my father, who lived in the full glare of publicity, was always willing that his politics, his opinions, and his personal conduct should be discussed by the critics and the press, although he shrank with great reluctance from placing names which were dear to him before the public. That they should incur the slightest censure, that they

should be mentioned with any severity, he dreaded extremely. He was timid when either his mother or his son was in question. His love for his mother had been the "grand passion" of his life. To her he ascribed all the happiness of his youth, every merit which he possessed, and all the success of every kind that had come to him throughout his whole existence. He derived from her his qualities alike of heart and mind; he was bound to her by the tie of close similarity of mind, as well as by that of filial affection. Her memory, her letters, her thoughts occupied a place in his life which few suspected, for he seldom spoke of her, precisely because he was always thinking of her, and he would have feared imperfect sympathy from others in his admiration of her who was incomparable in his eyes. Who among us does not know what it is to be united by a passionate, almost fierce, affection to one who is no more; ceaselessly to think of that beloved one, to question, to dream, to be always under the impression of the vanished presence—of the silent counsels; to feel that the life gone from us is mixed up with our own life, every day, not only on great occasions, and in all our actions, whether public or private; and yet, that we cannot bear to speak to others, no, not to our dearest friends, of the ever-present occupant of our thoughts, that we cannot even hear the dear name uttered without secret pain and

disquiet? Rarely, indeed, can the very sweetness of praise lavished upon that name by a friend or a stranger, avail to soothe our deep, mysterious trouble, or render it endurable.

While, however, a proper and natural sentiment dictates that Memoirs should not appear until a considerable time has elapsed, it is equally desirable that their publication should not be delayed until all trace of the facts related, of the impressions made, or of the eye-witnesses of events, has passed away. In order that the accuracy, or at least the sincerity, of Memoirs may not be disputed, each family should be in a position to substantiate them by its own recollections; and it is well that the generation which reads them should follow that which they depict. The records they contain are all the more useful because the times which they chronicle have not yet become altogether historic. This is our case at the present moment, and the great name of Napoleon is still a party battle-cry. It is interesting to introduce a new element into the strife which rages around that majestic shade. Although the epoch of the First Empire has been much discussed by the writers of Memoirs, the inner life of the Imperial palace has never been handled freely, and in detail; and for this good reasons have existed. The officials or the frequenters of the Court of Napoleon I. did not care to reveal with entire

unreserve the story of the time they had passed in his service. The majority, having joined the Legitimist ranks after the Restoration, were humiliated by the remembrance that they had served the usurper, especially in offices which are generally held to be ennobled only by the hereditary greatness of him who confers them; and their descendants would have been disconcerted had such manuscripts been left to them, by their authors, with the obligation of giving them to the world. It would, perhaps, be difficult to find another editor, also a grandson, who could publish such a work so willingly as I. The talent of the writer, and the utility of her book, affect me much more than the difference between the opinions of my grandmother and those of her descendants. My father's life, his renown, the political creed which is his most precious bequest to me, absolve me from any necessity for explaining how and why it is that I do not necessarily adopt all the views of the author of these Memoirs. On the contrary, it would be easy to find in this book the first traces of that liberal spirit which animated my grandparents in the first days of the Revolution, and was transmitted to and largely developed in their son. It was almost being liberal already not to regard the principles of political liberty with hatred at the end of the last century, when so many people were ready to lay crimes which tarnished the Revo-

lution to the charge of that liberty, and to pass judgment, notwithstanding the true admiration and the deep gratitude with which they regarded the Emperor, on the defects of his character, and the evils of despotism.

This impartiality was rare indeed among the contemporaries of the great Emperor, nor have we met with it in our own time among the servants of a sovereign far less likely to dazzle those who approached him. Such a sentiment is, however, easy at the present day. Events have brought France into a state in which she is ready to receive everything with equanimity, to judge every one with equity. We have observed many changes of opinion concerning the early years of the present century. One need not have reached a very advanced stage of life to recall a time when the legend of the Empire was accepted even by the enemies of the Empire; when it might be admired with impunity; when children believed in an Emperor, who was at once a great personage and a good fellow, somewhat like the notion of God entertained by Béranger, who indeed turned both God and Napoleon into heroes for his odes. The most determined adversaries of despotism, those who were themselves destined to persecution under a Second Empire, brought back to France the mortal remains of Napoleon the Great—his "ashes," as, lending an

antique colouring to a modern ceremony, it was the fashion to say just then. At a later date, experience of the Second Empire opened the eyes, even of those who do not admit passion into politics, to the truth respecting the First. The disasters brought upon France in 1870, by Napoleon III., have reminded us that it was the other Emperor who commenced that fatal work; and an almost general malediction rises to the lips of the nation at that name—Bonaparte—which was once uttered with respectful enthusiasm. So fluctuating is the justice of nations! It is, however, allowable to say that the justice of France to-day comes nearer to true justice than at the time when, swayed by the longing for rest and the dread of liberty, she surrendered herself to the passion for military glory. Between these two extremes how many modes of opinion have arisen, and gone through their several phases of triumph and decline! It will be evident to all readers, I hope, that the author of the following Memoirs, who came to the Court in her youth, regarded those problems which were then and still are in debate, although General Bonaparte thought he had solved them, with an entire absence of prejudice. Her opinions were formed by degrees, like the opinions of France itself, which was also very young in those days. She was at first dazzled and aroused to enthusiasm by the great genius of the age, but

she afterwards recovered the balance of her judgment by the aid of events, and of contact with other minds. More than one of our contemporaries may find in these Memoirs an explanation of the conduct or the state of mind of some persons of their kin whose Bonapartism or Liberalism at different epochs has hitherto appeared inexplicable to them. And also—not their least merit in my eyes—these Memoirs will reveal to the reader the first germs of a remarkable talent, which was developed in the writer's son to a supreme degree.

A brief summary of the life of my grandmother, or at least of the period which preceded her arrival at Court, is indispensable to the reader's comprehension of the impressions and the remembrances which she brought thither. My father had frequently projected a complete biography of his parents, and had, indeed, sketched out some portions of the work. He did not leave any of it in a finished condition; but a great number of notes and fragments written by his own hand, concerning the members of his family, his own youthful opinions, and persons whom he had known, render it easy to narrate the incidents of my grandmother's early years, the feelings with which she entered upon her life at Court, and the circumstances that led her to write her Memoirs. It is also in my power to add some comments upon her by her son, which will lead the reader to know

and esteem her. It was my father's strong desire that her readers should be inspired with kindly sentiments towards the object of his own devoted love and admiration; and I believe that the perusal of her reminiscences, and especially of her correspondence, which is also to be given to the public in due time, cannot fail to secure the realization of his wish.

II.

Claire Elisabeth Jeanne Gravier de Vergennes was born on the 5th of January, 1780. Her father was Charles Gravier de Vergennes, Counsellor to the Parliament of Burgundy, Master of Requests,* afterwards Intendant of Auch, and finally Director of the Vingtièmes.† My great-grandfather was not, therefore, as it has been frequently but erroneously stated, the minister who was so well-known as the Comte de Vergennes. That minister had an elder brother who was called "the Marquis," the first of the family, I believe, who bore such a title. This marquis had quitted the magistracy to enter upon a diplomatic career. He was acting as minister in

* An official in France, whose duty it was to report petitions to the Council of State.

† The *Vingtième* was a tax imposed, under the *ancien régime*, on land and house property, and which amounted to a twentieth of the revenue.

Switzerland in 1777, when the French treaties with the Helvetian Republic were renewed. Afterwards he was given the title of ambassador. His son, Charles Gravier de Vergennes, who was born at Dijon in 1751, married Adelaïde Françoise de Bastard, born about 1760. This lady's family came originally from Gascony, and a branch of it, whose members distinguished themselves at the bar and in the magistracy, was settled at Toulouse. Her father, Dominique de Bastard, born at Lafitte (Haute Garonne), had been one of the counsellors to the parliament, and was the senior counsellor at the time of his death. His bust is in the Salle des Illustres in the Capitol. He took an active part in the measures of Chancellor Maupeou. His daughter's husband, M. de Vergennes, being a member of the legal profession, bore, as was the custom under the old *régime*, no title. It is said that he was a man of only ordinary ability, who took his pleasure in life without much discrimination, but also that he had good sense and was a useful official. He belonged to that administrative school, of which MM. de Trudaine were the leaders.

Madame de Vergennes, of whom my father constantly spoke, was a person of more individuality of character; she was both clever and good. When he was quite a child, my father was on most confidential terms with her, as grandsons frequently

are with their grandmothers. In his bright and kindly nature, his pleasant raillery, which was never malicious, he resembled her; and from her he also inherited his musical gifts, a good voice for singing, and a quick memory for the airs and couplets of the vaudevilles of the day. He never lost his habit of humming the popular songs of the old *régime*. Madame de Vergennes had the ideas of her time—a touch of philosophy, stopping short of incredulity, and a certain repugnance to the Court, although she regarded Louis XVI. with affection and respect. Her intellect, which was bright, practical, and independent, was highly cultivated; her conversation was brilliant and sometimes very free, after the manner of the period. Nevertheless, she gave her two daughters, Claire and Alix,* a strict, and indeed rather solitary education, for it was the fashion of that day that parents should see but little of their children. The two sisters studied in a large, fireless room, apart from the rest of the house, under the inspection of a governess, and were instructed in what may be called the frivolous arts—music, drawing, and dancing. They were seldom taken to see a play, but they were occasionally indulged with a visit to the opera, and now and then with a ball.

* Some years later, Mademoiselle Alix de Vergennes married General de Nansouty.

M. de Vergennes had not desired or foreseen the Revolution; but he was neither displeased nor alarmed by it. He and his friends belonged to that citizen class, ennobled by holding public offices, which passed as the nation itself, and he cannot have found himself much out of his place among those who were called "the electors of '89." He was elected a member of the Council of the Commune, and made a major in the National Guard. M. de Lafayette, whose granddaughter was to become the wife of M. de Vergennes' grandson, forty years after, and M. Roger Collard, whom that grandson was to succeed at the French Academy, treated him like one of themselves. His opinions were more in accordance with those of M. Collard than with those of M. de Lafayette, and the French Revolution soon shot far ahead of him. He did not, however, feel any inclination to emigrate. His patriotism, as well as his attachment to Louis XVI., led him to remain in France; and thus he was unable to elude that fate which, in 1793, threatened all who were in positions similar to his, and of the same way of thinking. He was falsely accused by the Administration of the Department of Saône et Loire, of intending to emigrate; his property was placed under sequestration; and he was arrested in Paris, at the house in the Rue Saint Eustache which he

had inhabited since 1788. The man who arrested him had no warrant from the Committee of Public Safety except for the arrest of M. de Vergennes' father. He took the son because he lived with the father, and both died on the same scaffold on the 6th Thermidor (24th of July, 1794), three days before the fall of Robespierre.*

M. de Vergennes' death left his unhappy wife and daughters unprotected, and in straitened circumstances, as he had sold his estate in Burgundy a short time previously, and its price had been confiscated by the nation. There remained to them, however, one friend, not powerful, indeed, but full of zeal and good will. This was a young man with whom M. de Vergennes had become acquainted in the early days of the Revolution, whose family had formerly been of some importance in the commercial world, and also in the civic administration of Marseilles, so that the younger members were taking their places in the magistracy and in the army, in short, among "the privileged," as the phrase then went. This young man, Augustin Laurent de Rémusat, was born at Valensoles, in Provence, on the 28th of August, 1762. After having studied, with great credit, at Juilly, the former seat of that Oratorian College which still

* For the text of the accusation against M. de Vergennes, see Appendix.

exists near Paris, he was nominated, at twenty years of age, advocate-general to the *Cour des Aides* and the *Chambre des Comptes Réunies* * of Provence. My father has sketched the portrait of that young man, his arrival in Paris, and his life in the midst of the new society. The following note tells, better than I could, how M. de Rémusat loved and married Mademoiselle Claire de Vergennes :—

"The society of Aix, a city in which nobles dwelt and a parliament assembled, was of the brilliant order. My father lived a great deal in society. He was of an agreeable presence, had a great deal of pleasant humour, fine and polished manners, high spirits, and a reputation for gallantry. He sought and obtained all the social success that a young man could desire. Nevertheless, he attended sedulously to his profession, which he liked, and he married, in 1783, Mademoiselle de Sannes, the daughter of the *Procureur-Général* of his *Compagnie*. This marriage was dissolved by the death of Madame de Rémusat, who died shortly after the birth of a daughter.

"The Revolution broke out; the Supreme Courts were suppressed; and the settling of their business was a serious and important affair. In order

* These obsolete institutions have no English equivalents. They are, respectively, the auxiliary and superior courts established for the examination of the accounts of the receivers of the money of the State.

to carry it through, the *Cour des Aides* sent a deputation to Paris. My father was one of the delegates. He has often told me that he had occasion to see M. de Mirabeau, then deputy for Aix, on the business of his mission; and notwithstanding his prejudices as an adherent of the old parliaments, he was charmed with Mirabeau's pompous politeness. My father never told me details of his manner of living, so that I do not know what were the circumstances under which he went to the house of my grandfather Vergennes. He passed through the terrible years of the Revolution alone and unknown in Paris, and without any personal mishaps. Society no longer existed. His company was therefore all the more agreeable, and even the more useful to my grandmother (Madame de Vergennes), who was involved in great anxieties and misfortunes. My father used to tell me that my grandfather was a commonplace sort of man, but he soon learned to appreciate my grandmother very highly, and she conceived a liking for him. She was a wise, moderate-minded woman, who entertained no fancies, cherished no prejudices, and gave way to no impulses. She distrusted everything in which there was any exaggeration, and detested affectation of every kind, but she was readily touched by solid worth and by genuine feeling; while her clear-headedness, and her practical, somewhat sarcastic,

turn of mind preserved her from everything that lacked prudence or morality. Her head was never betrayed by her heart; but as she had suffered from the neglect of a husband to whom she was superior, she was disposed to make inclination and choice the ruling motives of marriage.

"Immediately after the death of my grandfather a decree was issued by which all nobles were ordered to quit Paris. Madame de Vergennes retired to Saint Gratien, in the valley of Montmorency, with her two daughters, Claire and Alix; and she gave my father permission to follow her thither. His society was valuable to them. His bright and cheerful nature, his amiability, and careful attentions to those he loved, made him a charming companion. His taste for a quiet life, the country, and seclusion, and his cultivated mind, exactly fitted him for a family circle composed of intelligent persons, and in which education was always going on. I cannot believe that my grandmother did not early foresee, and acquiesce in that which was destined to happen, even supposing there was not at that time anything to read in the heart of her daughter. It is certain, for my mother says so in several of her letters, that although she was then only a child, her prematurely serious turn of mind, her sensitive and emotional nature, her vivid imagination, and finally, the combined influences of intimacy, solitude, and

misfortune, all united to inspire her with an interest in my father, which from the first had the characteristics of a lofty and abiding sentiment. I do not think I have ever met a woman in whom so much moral strictness was so closely combined with romantic sensibility as my mother. Her youth, her extreme youth, was, as it were, steadied by those fortunate circumstances which bound her to duty by ties of passion, and procured for her that rare combination, peace of soul and the delightful agitation of the heart.

"She was not tall, but her figure was elegant and well-proportioned. She was fair and plump; indeed, it used to be feared that she would grow too fat. Her eyes were fine and expressive, black, like her hair; her features were regular, but rather too large. Her countenance was grave, almost imposing; but the intelligent kindliness of her glance tempered the gravity of her face very pleasantly. Her strong, well-trained, fertile intellect had certain virile qualities, with which the extreme vividness of her imagination frequently clashed. She possessed sound judgment and keen powers of observation, and she was entirely unaffected in her manners and in her modes of expression, although she was not without a certain subtlety of ideas. In reality, she was profoundly reasonable, but she was headstrong; her intellect was more reasonable than herself. In

her youth she lacked gaiety, and probably may have appeared to be pedantic because she was serious, and affected because she was silent, absent-minded, and indifferent to almost all the small things of every-day life. But, with her mother, whose cheerful moods she sometimes crossed; with her husband, whose simple tastes and easy temper she never crossed, she was not wanting in archness and freedom. She had even a kind of gaiety of her own, which developed as she grew older, when, having been very absent and absorbed in her own thoughts while she was very young, she became more like her mother. I have often thought that if she had lived long enough to have shared the home in which I am writing to-day, she would have been the merriest of us all."

My father wrote these lines in 1857, at Lafitte (Haute Garonne), where all those whom he loved were assembled, and we were gay and happy. In quoting them I am somewhat outrunning my narrative, for he speaks here of his mother as of a woman and not as of a young girl, and Claire de Vergennes, when she married, early in the year 1796, was hardly sixteen years old.

M. and Mme. de Rémusat—for thus I shall designate them henceforth, for the sake of clearness in my story—lived sometimes in Paris, and sometimes in a modest country house at Saint Gratien, a

residence which had two strong recommendations—the beauty of the landscape and the attraction of the neighbourhood.

Nearest and pleasantest of neighbours were the owners of Sannois, with whom Madame de Vergennes was very intimate. Jean Jacques Rousseau's "Confessions," Madame d'Epinay's "Mémoires," and numerous works of the last century as well, have made the place and the persons known to the world. Madame d'Houdetôt (Sophie de Lalive) had lived peacefully, in her old age, throughout the troublous time of the Revolution in that country house, in the society of her husband and of M. de Saint Lambert.* Between the famous trio and the young couple at Saint Gratien so close an intimacy was formed, that when the house at Saint Gratien was sold, my grandparents hired one within a shorter distance of the residence of their friends, and a way of communication was made between the gardens of their respective abodes. By degrees, however, M. de Rémusat got into the habit of going to Paris more and more frequently; and as the times became quieter, he began to think of emerging from obscurity, and from the narrow circumstances to which he was reduced by the confiscation of the property of his wife's father, and the loss of his own place in the magistracy. As is always the case in

* See Appendix.

France, it was of employment in some public function that he thought. He had no relations with the Government, or even with M. de Talleyrand, who was then Foreign Minister, but he directed his efforts towards that department, and obtained, if not exactly a place, at least an occupation, which was likely to lead to a place, in the office of the solicitors to the Ministry.

Besides the agreeable and intellectual relations which they maintained with Sannois, M. and Mme. de Rémusat had formed an intimacy no less close, but which was destined to exercise a much greater influence over their fortunes, with Madame de Beauharnais, who, in 1796, became the wife of Bonaparte. When her friend had acquired power through her all-powerful husband, Madame de Vergennes applied to her on behalf of her son-in-law, who wished to enter the Council of State or the Administration. The First Consul, however, or his wife, had a different idea of what ought to be done. The consideration and respect in which Madame de Vergennes was held, her social station, her name—allied both to the old *régime* and to the new ideas—gave a certain value to the relations of her family with the consular palace, which at that time had but little intercourse with Parisian society. Quite unexpectedly, M. de Rémusat was appointed Prefect of the Palace, in 1802; and shortly afterwards Madame

de Rémusat became Lady-in-Waiting (*Dame pour Accompagner*) to Madame Bonaparte, a title which was soon changed into the better sounding one of Lady of the Palace (*Dame du Palais*).

III.

Persons of the way of thinking of M. and Mme. de Rémusat had no sacrifice to make in casting in their lot with the new *régime*. They had neither the extravagant sentiments of the Royalists nor the austerity of the Republicans. No doubt their attitude of mind approached more nearly to that of the Royalists than to that of the Republicans, but their royalism reduced itself to pious veneration for Louis XVI. The misfortunes of that unhappy prince rendered his memory sacred, and his person had always been regarded in the family of M. de Vergennes with peculiar respect; but "Legitimacy" had not yet been invented, and those persons who most deeply deplored the fall of the old *régime*, or rather that of the ancient dynasty, did not hold themselves under any obligation to believe that everything done in France in the absence of the Bourbons was null and void. Pure and unalloyed admiration was inspired by the young general who was re-establishing material, if not moral, order, with such brilliant success, in a society which was

disturbed after a fashion very different from that of those successive later times, in which so many worthless "saviours" have turned up.

Public functionaries in those days adhered to the opinion, which was very natural under the old *régime*, that an official is responsible only for what he does, and not for either the acts or the origin of the Government. The sense of "solidarity" does not exist in absolute monarchies. The parliamentary *régime* has happily rendered us more sensitive, and all honest people now admit the collective responsibility of all the agents of a Power. One could not nowadays serve a Government whose tendency and general policy one did not approve; but it was otherwise in former times. My father—who had more right than any one else to be strict in these matters, and who, perhaps, owed somewhat of his extreme political scrupulousness to the difficult position in which he had seen his parents placed during his own childhood, between their private impressions and their official duties—explains these shades of difference in an unpublished letter to M. Sainte Beuve, to whom he had communicated certain biographical details for an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

"It was not as a *pis aller*, from necessity, weakness, or as a temporary expedient, that my parents attached themselves to the new *régime*. Of their free

will and with entire confidence they united themselves with its fortunes. If you add to this, all the pleasures of an easy and prominent position, to be stepped into from one of poverty and obscurity, the curiosity which a Court of so novel a kind inspired, the incomparable interest of the spectacle of a man like the Emperor at an epoch when he was irreproachable, young, and still amiable, you can easily conceive the attraction which induced my parents to overlook all that was in reality opposed to their tastes, their reason, and even their true interests in this new position. At the end of two or three years, they had learned too well that a Court is always a Court, and that all is not pleasure in the personal service of an absolute master, even though he may charm and dazzle. But this did not prevent their being for a long time well enough satisfied with their lot. My mother especially was much amused with all that passed before her eyes, and she was on very good terms with the Empress, who was extremely kind and generous, while she enthusiastically admired the Emperor. He treated my mother with flattering distinction. She was almost the only woman with whom he ever talked. My mother would sometimes say, after the Empire had ceased to exist,

'Va, je t'ai trop aimé pour ne pas te haïr!'"

Of the impressions made by the new Court upon

the new Lady of the Palace we have no record. The security of the Post-office was very doubtful. Madame de Vergennes burned all her daughter's letters, and the correspondence of the latter with her husband does not commence until some years later, during the Emperor's journeys in Italy and Germany. Nevertheless, we can perceive from her Memoirs, although they do not abound in personal details, how strange and novel everything seemed to so very young a woman, transplanted all of a sudden into this palace, and an eye-witness of the private life of the glorious chief of an unknown government. She was very serious, as, when they are not very frivolous, the young are apt to be, and much disposed to observation and reflection. She seems to have had no taste for display, no great solicitude about external things, no turn for gossip or the running-down of other people, no love of talking or display. What was thought of her at that time? We cannot tell. We only know, from certain passages in sundry letters and Memoirs, that she was considered clever, and that people were a little afraid of her. Probably, however, her companions thought her pedantic rather than dangerous. She had a considerable "success," especially at first; for in its early days the Court was not numerous—there were few distinctions or favours to be schemed for, rivalry was

not very brisk or ardent. Little by little, however, this little society became a real Court. Now, courtiers are always afraid of intellect, and especially of that disposition, unintelligible to them, which clever people have to interest themselves in a disinterested manner, so to speak, in knowing things and judging characters, without even thinking of turning their knowledge to their own advantage. Courtiers always suspect that every opinion has a hidden aim. Persons of quick intellect are very strongly impressed by the spectacle of human affairs, even when they are merely looking on at them. And that faculty is the most incomprehensible to those who do not possess it, and who attribute its effects to some personal motive, or interested calculation. They suspect intrigue or resentment every time that they observe a movement in any direction, but they have no idea of the spontaneous and gratuitous action of the mind. Every one has been exposed to suspicion of this kind, which is more to be dreaded when a woman, endowed with excessive activity of imagination, and drawn on by her intelligence to form opinions on matters out of her sphere, is in question. Many persons, especially in that somewhat coarse society, would detect egotism and pretension in her life and conversation, and unduly accuse her of ambition.

That her husband was entirely devoid of ambition

and free from any disposition to intrigue was evident to all. The position in which the favour of the First Consul had placed him did not suit him; he would, no doubt, have preferred some laborious administrative function to one which demanded nothing of him but suavity and a graceful demeanour. From the Memoirs, from his own letters, and from my father's account of him, we gather that M. de Rémusat was a man of discreet conduct, with keen wits, and a cheerful and even temper—not at all a person calculated to make enemies. Indeed, he would never have had any, but for a certain shyness, which, little as it seems to harmonize with conversational powers and an agreeable manner, is nevertheless occasionally allied with them. His taste for quiet life, and some indolence and timidity of character, had impelled him more and more towards retirement and isolation. Modesty and self-esteem mingled in his nature; and without rendering him insensible to the honours of the post which he had obtained, they sometimes made him ashamed of the solemn trifles to which that very post forced him to devote his life. He believed himself to be made for better things, but he did not care for toiling in search of that which did not come to him of itself. He took but little pleasure in exercising the art of managing men, but he was probably not deficient in it. He did

not care to put himself forward, and his indolent temperament induced him to let things take their chance. He afterwards became a hard-working prefect, but he was a negligent and inactive courtier. He employed his skill simply to avoid disputes, and he discharged his official functions with quiet good taste. After having had many friends and entered into numerous relations, he let them drop through, or at least he never seemed to do anything to retain them. Unless great care be taken, ties are loosened, recollections are effaced, rivalries are formed, and all the chances of ambition escape one's grasp. M. de Rémusat had no skill in playing a part, forming connections, bringing people together, or contriving the opportunities of fortune or success. He seems never to have regretted this. It would be easy for me to trace his motives—to depict his character in detail, and to narrate his errors, his grievances, and even his sufferings; for was he not my grandfather?

The first severe trial which M. and Mme. de Rémusat had to endure in their new position was the murder of the Duc d'Enghien. How profound was the grief which they felt when the man whom they ardently admired, as the express image of power and genius, and whom they strove to love, stained his hands with innocent blood, and they were forced to recognize that such a deed was

simply the result of a cold and inhuman calculation, the following narrative will prove. It will, indeed, be seen that the impression made by the crime upon all honest persons at the Court was even deeper than that which it produced outside among the general public, who had become almost indifferent, through custom, to deeds of this kind. Even among the Royalists, who were absolutely inimical to the Government, the event caused more sorrow than indignation, so perverted had the public mind become in political matters and respecting State expedients! Where could the men of that day have acquired principles? Was it the old *régime* or the Terror which could have instructed them? A short time afterwards, the Sovereign Pontiff came to Paris, and, among the reasons which made him hesitate to crown the new Charlemagne, it is very doubtful whether this one was ever even weighed for a moment. The press was dumb, and men must be possessed of information before they are aroused to anger. Let us hope that civilization has now made so much progress that a repetition of similar incidents would be impossible. We should, however, be restrained from optimism on this point by the remembrance of what we have witnessed in our own time.

The following Memoirs are an exact record of the life of the author, and the history of the early

years of the present century. They show us what changes the establishment of the Empire effected at the Court, and how life there and its relations became more difficult and embarrassing; how by degrees the prestige of the Emperor declined, in proportion as he misused his great gifts, his power, and his chances. Mistakes, reverses, and failures were multiplied; and at the same time the adhesion of the earliest admirers of the Emperor became less fervent, and the manner of serving reflected the mode of thinking. Two parties, the Beauharnais and the Bonapartes, disputed the favour of the sovereign master with each other; and M. and Mme. de Rémusat were regarded as belonging to the former, by reason of their natural feelings and their family relations. Their position was consequently affected in no small degree by the downfall and departure of the Empress Josephine. Everything was, however, much changed, and when her Lady of the Palace followed her into retirement, the Emperor seems to have made but little effort to detain Madame de Rémusat. Perhaps he was glad that there was a person of good sense and quick intelligence to watch over his forsaken and somewhat imprudent wife; but it must also be taken into account that my grandmother's delicate health, her love of quiet, and her distaste for festivities, had of late isolated her almost entirely from Court life.

Her husband, wearied and disgusted, gave way every day more and more to his discontent, and to his inability to lay himself out to please the great personages who were either cold or hostile to him. He neglected his functions as Chamberlain in order to concentrate himself on his duties as "Administrator of Theatres," but the latter he fulfilled admirably. A great part of the actual organization of the Théâtre Français is due to him. My father, born in 1797, and very young when his father was Chamberlain to the Emperor, was remarkable as a child for his intelligence and his observation, and he retained a very distinct recollection of that period of discouragement and ennui. He has told me that he frequently knew his father to return from Saint Cloud utterly worn out, and tried beyond his patience by the burthen which the arbitrariness and the ill temper of the Emperor laid upon all who approached him. That the child was an eye and ear witness of his complaints at those moments in which restraints are cast off, is evident, for, when he had recovered, he was fain to represent himself as satisfied with his master and his position, and he endeavoured to conceal his vexations from his son. Perhaps he was better calculated to serve the simple, tranquil, sober, intellectual Bonaparte, while still a novice in the pleasures of sovereignty, than the *blasé* and intoxicated Napoleon, who ex-

hibited the worst taste possible on all State occasions, and became more exacting every day in the matter of ceremonial and adulatory observance.

An apparently trifling circumstance, whose gravity was not at first perceived by those whom it concerned, increased the difficulties of the situation, and hurried on the inevitable catastrophe. Although the history of the affair is insignificant, it will not be read without interest, and it sheds a light upon times now happily far removed from us, and which Frenchmen, if the lessons of the past are to avail, will not suffer to return.

The celebrated Lavoisier was very intimate with M. de Vergennes. He died, as every one knows, on the scaffold, on the 19th Floreal, year 2 (9th of May, 1794). His widow, who contracted a second marriage with M. Rumford, a German *savant*, or at least a commercial man who affected science—for he was the inventor of the Prussian stoves, and of the thermometer that bears his name—remained on terms of close friendship with Madame de Vergennes and her family. This second marriage had not been happy, and compassion was, very justly, excited on behalf of the ill-treated wife, who was compelled to invoke the protection of the law against unendurable tyranny and exaction. As M. Rumford was a foreigner, it was in the power of the police to procure information respecting him from his own

country, to reprimand him severely, and even to oblige him to leave France. This, I believe, was eventually done, and it was at the request of my grandmother that M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché took up the matter. Madame Rumford was anxious to evince her gratitude to those personages, and the following is my father's account of the results of her wish :—

"My mother consented to invite Madame Rumford to dinner, to meet M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché. Surely, it was not an act of opposition to entertain the High Chamberlain and the Minister of Police at her table! Nevertheless, that meeting—so naturally brought about, the motive of which was as insignificant as it was harmless, but which was, I acknowledge, unusual, and never occurred again—was represented to the Emperor, in the reports that were sent out to him in Spain, as a political conference, and the proof of an important coalition. Although I do not contend that it was impossible for M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché to have taken advantage of the opportunity of talking together; or deny that my mother, perceiving the respective inclinations of the two, or put upon the scent by something that was said by M. de Talleyrand, might have regarded the occasion as a favourable one for bringing about an interview which amused herself at the same time that it was

useful to one of her friends, I have not the slightest reason for supposing that such was the case. I am, on the contrary, perfectly certain of having heard my father and mother quote this incident, when reverting to it some years afterwards, as an instance of the unexpected importance which may be assumed by a fortuitous and insignificant matter, and say, smilingly, that Madame Rumford little knew what she had cost them.

"They added that the word 'triumvirate' had been uttered on that occasion, and my mother had said, laughingly, 'My dear, I am sorry for it; but your lot could only be that of Lepidus.' My father also said that certain persons of the Court, not enemies of his, had spoken of 'the Conference' to him as a fact, and said, though without any hostile intention, 'Now that is all over, tell us what it was about, and what it was you really meant to do?'"

This narrative gives us an insight into the life of Courts, and also testifies to the intimacy of my grandparents with M. de Talleyrand. Although the former Bishop of Autun does not seem to have been actuated in this particular instance by that kind of feeling which he habitually carried into his relations with women, he both liked and admired Madame de Rémusat. I have found amusing evidence of his sentiments in a

sketch of her which he wrote, on the official paper of the Senate, during the leisure time of a sitting at which he presided as "Vice-Grand Elector," probably in 1811.

"Conservative Senate,

"Luxembourg, 29th April.

"I have a fancy for commencing the portrait of Clari. She is not what the world calls a beauty, but every one agrees in proclaiming her an agreeable woman. She is twenty-eight or twenty-nine years old, and she is neither more nor less blooming than she ought to be at twenty-eight. Her figure is good, her carriage is graceful and unaffected. Clari is not thin; she is only slight and refined. Her complexion is not brilliant, but she has the special charm of looking fairer in proportion as she is in a stronger light. To describe Clari in a sentence, let me say that the better she is known the more amiable she appears.

"Clari has large, black eyes; their long lids give her an expression of mingled tenderness and vivacity which is striking, even when her mind is inactive and she does not want to express anything. Those occasions are, however, very rare. Lively ideas, quick perception, a vivid imagination, exquisite sensibility, and constant kindness are expressed in her glance. To give an idea of that, it would be necessary

to paint the soul which depicts itself in it, and then Clari would be the most beautiful of beings. I am not sufficiently well versed in the rules of drawing to know whether Clari's features are quite regular. I believe her nose is too thick; but I know that she has beautiful eyes, lips, and teeth. A great part of her forehead is generally hidden by her hair, and that is a pity. Her smile is rendered as arch as it is sweet by her two dimples. Her dress is often careless, but never in bad taste, and she is scrupulously neat. That neatness forms part of the system of order and decorum from which Clari never deviates. Clari is not rich, but, as she is moderate in her tastes and above caprice and fancy, she despises extravagance, and has never perceived that her fortune is limited, except when she has been obliged to restrain her benevolence. But, besides the art of giving, she has a thousand other ways of conferring kindnesses. Always ready to commend good deeds, and to pardon faults, her mind is ever bent on beneficent purposes. Clari affords us a striking proof of how much superior a kindly wit is to talent which produces only severity, criticism, and satire. She is more ingenious in her manner of passing favourable judgments than ever was malignity in the art of suggesting the false and suppressing the true.

"Clari always vindicates those whose part she

takes, but without offending those whom she confutes. Clari has a large and cultivated mind. I know no one who can talk better than she; but she exhibits her superior information only when she is giving one a proof of her confidence and friendship. Clari's husband knows that he possesses a treasure, and has the good sense to appreciate it. Clari is a good mother; that is her reward. . . ."

The Emperor was displeased at the intimacy between the Grand Chamberlain and the First Chamberlain, and these Memoirs will show that he tried more than once to set the two at variance. He even succeeded for a time in alienating them. But their intimacy was unbroken when M. Talleyrand fell into disgrace.

It is well known that honourable motives on his part led to a violent altercation between himself and his Imperial master in January, 1809, at the period of the Spanish war, which was the beginning of the misfortunes of the Empire, and the result of the Emperor's errors. Both M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché predicted, or at least foreboded, that public disapprobation and suspicion would be aroused. "Throughout the whole Empire," writes M. Thiers,* "hate was beginning to take the place of love." This change was taking place among officials as well as citizens. Moreover, M. de Mon-

* "Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire," vol. xi. p. 312.

tesquiou, a member of the Legislature, who succeeded M. de Talleyrand in his place at Court, was a less important personage than the latter, who had relegated to the First Chamberlain not only the troublesome portions of the duties of his post, but also those which were agreeable, and which conferred distinction. It was a "come-down" to lose a chief whose own importance enhanced that of the position next below him. Truly this was a strange time!

Talleyrand, though in disgrace as a Minister, and as the holder of one of the highest posts at Court, had not forfeited the Emperor's confidence. The latter would send for him every now and then, and freely disclose the secret of the question or the circumstance on which he desired his advice. These consultations went on to the end, even at those times when the Emperor was talking of sending M. de Talleyrand to Vincennes. In return, M. de Talleyrand would enter into his views, and advise him with perfect frankness; and so this strange intercourse was carried on as if nothing had happened between them.

State policy and the greatness of his own position afforded certain privileges and consolations to M. de Talleyrand which were beyond the reach of a Chamberlain or a Lady-in-Waiting. Those who are in close contact with absolute power do not foresee that the day must come when their feelings will

clash with their interests, and some of their duties with others. They forget that there are principles of government which must be guarded by constitutional guarantees. They yield to the natural desire to be "somebodies" in the State, to serve the established authority; they do not study the nature and conditions of that authority. So long as it exacts nothing against their conscience, they serve it in the sphere to which it has appointed them. But the hour comes when, without exacting anything new from them, it carries extravagance, violence, and injustice to such a height that it becomes hard to obey it, even in things of no moment; they remain nevertheless bound to obedience, while in their inmost soul they are full of indignation and of pain. Then comes actual desire for its fall. It may be said that their course is simple; let them resign. But they are afraid of giving rise to rumour and scandal, of being neither understood nor approved by public opinion. Moreover, no contract binds the servants of the State to the conduct of the chief of the State. Having no rights they would seem to have no duties. They are powerless for prevention, and are therefore not afraid of having to expiate errors. Thus people thought in the reign of Louis XIV., and thus they still think in a great part of Europe; it was thus they thought under Napoleon, and perhaps they will be of the same opinion again.

So shameful and wretched a thing is absolute power! It paralyzes both the honest scruples and the real duties of honest men.

IV.

Traces of these convictions, or at least of their germ, may be discerned in the correspondence of M. and Mme. de Rémusat, and all things contributed to confirm them. Direct communication with the Emperor became more and more infrequent, and his charm of manner, though still powerful, failed to weaken the impression made by his policy. The divorce of the Empress restored to Madame de Rémusat, in great part, her freedom of judgment and the disposal of her time. She attached herself to the Empress Josephine in her disgrace, a proceeding not calculated to raise her in the estimation of the Court. Her husband soon after retired from the post of Keeper of the Wardrobe, under circumstances which are detailed in these Memoirs, and the coolness increased. I use the word "coolness" advisedly, because in certain pamphlets written against my father it was alleged that his family had been guilty of grave offences, at which the Emperor was much incensed. That this was quite untrue is amply proved by the fact that although M. de Rémusat resigned the post of Keeper

of the Wardrobe, he continued to be Chamberlain and Supervisor of Theatres. He merely gave up the most troublesome and most onerous of his offices. No doubt those habits of intimacy and confidence which arise in common every-day life were weakened by his relinquishment of that post; but, on the other hand, he gained greater freedom and more frequent intercourse, both with his family and with society, and, as they were no longer restricted to the drawing-rooms of the Tuileries and St. Cloud, both husband and wife were enabled to bring more clear-sightedness and independence of judgment to bear upon the policy of their sovereign. Before the final disasters, aided by the advice and predictions of M. de Talleyrand, they foresaw the fall of the Empire, and were enabled to choose between the possible solutions of the problem then in course of working out. There was no hope that the Emperor would be satisfied with a peace more humiliating to himself than to France, and indeed Europe was no longer in the humour to gratify him even to that extent.

The public mind turned naturally towards the return of the Bourbons, notwithstanding certain drawbacks which were but dimly apprehended. The salons of Paris, without being actually Royalist, were anti-revolutionary. At this epoch the plan of making the Bonapartes heads of the Conservative

and Catholic party had not yet been invented. To bring back the Bourbons was a very momentous resolution, and it was not adopted without struggles, anxieties, and apprehensions of all sorts. My father regarded the painful recollection which he always retained of the attitude of his family in 1814—a family so simple, so honourable, and so unpretending—as a useful political lesson: one which contributed, as much as his own reflections, to lead him to believe that simplicity and straightforwardness are the truest policy. He records in the following words his own observations on the state of feeling that prevailed at the fall of the Empire:—

"Policy alone reconciled my family to the Restoration. My father never for a moment regarded his own acquiescence otherwise than as an absolute necessity, of which he voluntarily accepted the consequences. It would have been foolish to conceal the nature of those consequences, or to have endeavoured to avoid them altogether; but they might have been more firmly resisted, or at least some effort might have been made to reduce their proportions. My mother, as a woman, was influenced by the sentimental aspect of Bourbonism, and allowed herself to be carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment. In every great political movement there is a fascination, unless one is preserved from it by party spirit; and this sympathy, combined with the

national taste for declamation, has a large share in the absurdities which accompany every change of government. My mother was, however, disgusted from the first by the exaggeration of sentiment, of opinion, and of ridiculous language, that prevailed. The humiliating and insolent side of the Restoration, as indeed of every restoration, is what shocks me the most; but if the Royalists had not gone too far, a great deal would have been overlooked. The things of this kind which sensible folk will endure are surprising. I still feel grateful to my father because, in the very first days of the Monarchy, he somewhat sharply rebuked a person who was advocating in our salon the extreme doctrines of Legitimacy. Nevertheless, we had to accept this Legitimacy under a more politic form. The word itself was, I believe, sanctioned by M. de Talleyrand, and thence ensued an inevitable train of consequences which speedily developed themselves."

This is not merely an historical judgment of my father's; at that time he was beginning, notwithstanding his youth, to think for himself, and to guide, or at least to influence, the political opinions of his parents. As I shall soon be in a position to publish the reminiscences of his youth, I will not dwell upon them here. I must, however, mention him in connection with the Memoirs of his mother, as he had more to do with them than might be supposed.

I have not hitherto alluded to one of the most characteristic traits of her whose life I have undertaken to narrate. She was a tender, careful, and admirable mother. Her son Charles, born on the 24th Ventôse, year 5 (14th of March, 1797), cheered her from his childhood with the hopes which he afterwards realized, and, as he grew in years and intelligence, aroused in her aspirations similar to his own. Her second son, Albert, was born five years later than Charles, and died in 1830. His faculties were never completely developed; he remained a child until the end. She had tender compassion for him, and lavished upon him care so unceasing and devoted, that it was admirable even in a mother. But her great love was for her first-born, and never was filial or maternal affection founded on more striking resemblance in mind and character. Her letters are full of her maternal tenderness. The following is addressed to her beloved son, when he was just sixteen. I think it will convey a favourable impression of both, and throw a light on the history of their after lives:—

"Vichy, 25th July, 1813.

"I have been suffering from a severe sore throat for the last few days, and time has hung heavily, my child; to-day I feel a little better, and I am going to amuse myself by writing to you. Besides,

you have been scolding me for my silence, and reproaching me too often with your four letters. I will no longer be behindhand with you, and this letter, I think, will entitle me to scold you in my turn, if an opportunity offers. My dear boy, I follow you step by step in all your studies, and I see you are full of work during this month of July, which I am passing so monotonously. I know pretty well, too, all you say and do on Thursdays and Sundays. Madame de Grasse * tells me of your little talks, and amuses me with it all. For instance, she told me that the other day you had praised me to her, and said that when you and I talk together, you are sometimes tempted to think me too clever. But you need not be checked by any fear of that, for you, my dear child, have at least as much wit as I. I tell you so frankly, because that gift, although an advantage, needs many other things to support it, and therefore you may take my words rather as warning than as praise. If my conversation with you often takes a serious turn, you must impute it to the fact that I am your mother, and have not relinquished that *rôle*; to my discovery of some wise

* Madame de Grasse was the widow of an *émigré*, who lived in my grandmother's house and was very intimate with her. Her son, Count Gustave de Grasse, was a lieutenant-colonel in the Royal Guard, and lived on terms of the closest friendship with my father until his death in 1859, notwithstanding the wide dissimilarity of their opinions and habits.

thoughts in my own head, and wanting to put them into yours; and to my desire to make good use of the quickly passing time that will soon bear you far from me. When I need no longer advise and warn you, we shall talk together quite at our ease, interchanging our reflections, our remarks, and our opinions on everything and everybody quite frankly, without fear of vexing one another; in fact, with all that sincere and intimate friendship which, I believe, may perfectly well exist between a mother and a son. There are not so many years between us as to prevent me from sympathizing with your youth, or sharing some of your feelings. (Women's shoulders wear young heads for a long time, and in the head of a mother one side is always just the same age as her child's.)

"Madame de Grasse told me also that you want to amuse yourself during these holidays by writing some of your notions on various subjects. I think you are right. It will be interesting for you to read them again in a few years. Your father would say I want to make you a scribbler like myself—for he does not stand on ceremony with me—but I do not care. There can be no harm in setting down one's thoughts in writing for one's self alone, and I think both taste and style may be formed in this way. It is just because your father is lazy, and only writes one letter a week; true, it is a very pleasant

one, but still that is not much. . . . But there! I must not run on about him.

"During my retirement I thought I should like to draw your portrait, and if I had not had a sore throat, I would have tried to do so. While I was thinking it over, I found that in order not to be insipid, and, indeed, to be correct, I should have to point out a few faults, and I do believe the hard words have stuck in my throat and given me quinsy. While planning this portrait, I assure you I took you to pieces very carefully, and I found many good qualities well developed, a few just beginning to bud, and then some slight congestions which hinder certain others from exhibiting themselves. I beg your pardon for using a medical expression; it is because I am in a place where nothing but congestions and the way to get rid of them is talked about. I will explain all this some day when I am in the vein, but to-day I will touch only on one point; your behaviour to others. You are polite—more so, indeed, than is customary at your age; you have a pleasant manner in addressing people; and you are a good listener. Do not let this last quality slip. Madame de Sévigné says that an appreciative silence is a mark of superior sense in young people. 'But mother, what are you driving at? You promised to point out a fault, and hitherto I see nothing like one. A father's blow turns aside. Let us come to

the fact, my dear mother.' So I will, my son, in one moment; you forget that I have a sore throat, and can only speak slowly. Well, then, you are polite. When you are *asked* to do something which will gratify those you love, you consent willingly; but when an opportunity of so doing is merely pointed out to you, natural indolence and a certain love of self makes you hesitate; and, when left to yourself, you do not seek such opportunities, for fear of the trouble they might entail. Can you understand these subtle distinctions? While you are still partly under my authority, I can influence and guide you; but you will soon have to answer for yourself, and I should wish you to think a little about other people, notwithstanding the claims of your own youth, which are naturally engrossing. I am not sure that I have expressed myself clearly. As my ideas have to find their way through a headache and all my bandages, and for the last four days I have not sharpened my wits by contact with those of Albert, the quinsy may possibly have got into my discourse.

"You must make the best of it. At any rate, it is a fact that you have polished manners, in other words, you are kind. Kindness is the politeness of the heart. But enough. . . .

* * * * *

"Your little brother makes a good figure at the village dances. He has become quite a rustic. In

the morning he fishes and takes long walks about the country. He understands more about trees and agriculture than you do. In the evening he shines among our big Auvergne shepherdesses, to whom he shows off all those little airs and graces which you know so well.

"Adieu, my dear son; I leave off because I have come to the end of my paper. Writing all this to you relieves me a little of my *ennui*, but I must not quite overwhelm you by pouring out too much at a time. My respects to Griffon, and best compliments to M. Leclerc."*

In this confidential strain the mother and the son carried on their correspondence. One year later, in 1814, the son left school, destined to fulfil all the promise of his childhood, and to hold thenceforth a more important place in the life and occupations of his parents. His influence soon began to tell on theirs, the more so that there existed no absolute divergence in their opinions. But he was more positive and bolder than his parents, because he was not fettered by the ties of old memories and old affection. He felt no regret for the Emperor, and although deeply moved by the sufferings of the

* Griffon was a little dog. M. Leclerc was a member of the Institute and Dean of the Faculty of Letters. He died a few years ago. At that time he was a professor at the Lycée Napoléon, and gave lessons to my father.

French army, he witnessed the fall of the Empire, if not with joy, at least with indifference. To him, as to most talented young men of his time, it came as an emancipation. He eagerly embraced the first notions of constitutional order, which made their reappearance with the Bourbons. But he was struck by the ridiculous side of Royalist society. Many of the revived fashions and phrases * seemed to him to be mere foolery; he was disgusted by the abuse lavished upon the Emperor and the men of the Empire, but neither his parents nor he, although still a little suspicious of the new order of things, were seriously opposed to it. Neither the personal vexations, which resulted from it, such as the deprivation of employment, the necessity of selling to great disadvantage a library which was the delight of my grandfather, and which lives in the recollection of lovers of books, nor a thousand other annoyances could prevent their experiencing a sense of relief. They almost verified a celebrated saying of the Emperor, who, when at the zenith of his power, once asked those surrounding him what would be said after his death. They all hastened to answer in phrases of compliment or of flattery. But he interrupted them by exclaiming, "What! you are at a loss to know what people will say? They will say 'Ouf!'"

* For a note by Count de Rémusat, see Appendix.

V.

It was difficult to attend to personal interests in those days; one could hardly help being diverted from them, and engrossed solely by the spectacle of France and Europe. Curiosity would naturally outweigh ambition in a family such as we are depicting. My grandfather did nevertheless think of entering the Administration, and once more revived his project, hitherto doomed to disappointment, of gaining admittance to the Council of State; but he was as supine about it as before. Had he entered the Administration, he would only have been following the example of the majority of the former officials of the Empire, for the Bonapartist Opposition did not come into existence until the latter days of the Monarchy. The members of the Imperial family lived in constant and friendly intercourse with the new *régime*, or rather the reinstated old *régime*. The Empress Josephine was treated with great respect, and the Emperor Alexander frequently visited her at Malmaison. She wished to take up a dignified and fitting position, and she confided to her Lady-in-Waiting that she thought of asking the title of High Constable for her son Eugène, showing thereby that she scarcely understood the spirit of the Restoration. Queen Hortense,

who afterwards became the bitter enemy of the Bourbons, and was concerned in numerous conspiracies, obtained the Duchy of Saint Leu, for which she intended to return thanks in person to Louis XVIII. All projects of this kind had, however, to be abandoned, for the Empress Josephine was suddenly carried off by malignant sore throat in March, 1814, and the last link that bound my kinsfolk to the Bonaparte family was sundered for ever.

The Bourbons seemed to make a point of annoying and depressing those very persons whom their Government should have endeavoured to conciliate, and by slow degrees a belief gained ground that their reign would be of short duration, and that France, just then more in love with equality than with liberty, would demand to be placed once more under the yoke which had seemed to be shattered; in fact, that the days of Imperial splendour and misery would return. It was, therefore, with less amazement than might be supposed that my grandfather learned one day from a friend, that the Emperor had escaped from Elba and landed at Cannes. Historical events seem more astounding to those who read of them than to eye-witnesses. A sort of presentiment adds to logical inductions. Those who knew Bonaparte could readily believe him capable of again putting France and Frenchmen in peril for the sake of a selfish scheme. His

return was, however, a tremendous event, and every one had to think not only of the political future, but also of his own. Even those who, like M. de Rémusat, had not publicly taken any political side, and who only wanted to be left in repose and obscurity, had everything to lose, and were bound to provide against eventualities. The general suspense did not last long; even before the Emperor's entry into Paris, M. Réal came to announce to M. de Rémusat that he was sentenced to exile, together with twelve or fifteen others, among whom was M. Pasquier.

An event still more serious than exile, and which left a deeper trace in my father's memory, occurred between the first news of the return of Napoleon and his arrival at the Tuileries. On the day after that on which the landing was publicly announced, Madame de Nansouty hurried to her sister's house, full of dismay at all she had been told of the persecution to which the opponents of the vindictive and all-powerful Emperor were about to be exposed. She told my grandparents that a rigorous inquisition was to be put in action; that M. Pasquier by the police apprehended molestation, and that everything in the house which could give rise to suspicion must be got rid of. My grandmother, who might not otherwise have thought of danger, remembered with alarm that a manuscript highly calculated to compromise her husband, her sister, her brother-in-law, and her

friends, was in the house. For many years, probably from her first appearance at Court, she had been in the habit of taking notes daily, of the events and conversations which came under her notice, while her memory of them was fresh. She had recorded nearly everything she saw and heard, at Paris, at St. Cloud, and at Malmaison. For twelve years she had transferred, not only events and circumstances, but studies of character and disposition, to the pages of her journal. This journal was kept in the form of a correspondence. It consisted of a series of letters, written from Court to a friend from whom nothing was concealed. The author well knew all the value of these fictitious letters, which recalled her whole life, with its most precious and most painful recollections. Ought she to risk, for what would appear to others only literary or sentimental selfishness, the peace, the liberty, nay, even the life of those she loved? No one was aware of the existence of this manuscript, except her husband and Madame Chéron, the wife of the Prefect of that name, a very old and attached friend. Her thoughts turned to this lady, who had once before taken charge of the dangerous manuscript, and she hastened to seek her. Unfortunately, Madame Chéron was from home, and not likely to return for a considerable time. What was to be done? My grandmother came back, greatly distressed, and,

without further reflection or delay, threw her manuscripts into the fire. My father came into the room just as she was burning the last sheets, somewhat cautiously, lest the flame should reach too high. He was then seventeen, and has often described the scene to me—the remembrance of it was most painful to him. He thought at first that his mother was merely destroying a copy of the Memoirs, which he had never read, and that the precious original manuscript was safely concealed. He threw the last sheets into the fire with his own hand, attaching but little importance to the action. "Few deeds," he used to say, "after I learned all the truth, have I ever so bitterly regretted."

From the very first, the author and her son so deeply lamented what they had done—for they learned almost immediately that the sacrifice was uncalled for—that for years they could not speak of it between themselves or to my grandfather. The latter bore his exile with much philosophy—he was not forbidden to dwell in France, but only in Paris and its neighbourhood, and it was decided that they should all await the passing of the storm in Languedoc, where he possessed an estate which he had bought back from the heirs of M. de Bastard, his wife's grandfather, and which had long been neglected. The family removed therefore to Lafitte, where my father afterwards passed so many years,

now in the midst of political agitation, again in quiet study. In after days he again came thither from exile; for the sufferings of good citizens from absolute power was not to be restricted to the year 1815, and Napoleons have returned to France from a greater distance than the Isle of Elba.

My grandfather started for Lafitte on the 13th of March, and his family joined him there a few days afterwards. At Lafitte they passed the three months of that reign, shorter but still more fatal than the first, which has been called "The Hundred Days." There my father entered upon his literary career, not as yet producing original works, but translating Pope, Cicero, and Tacitus. His only original writings were his songs. The family lived quietly, unitedly, and almost happily, waiting the end of a tragedy of which they foresaw the *dénouement*, and at Lafitte they received the news of Waterloo. They heard at the same time of the abdication of Napoleon, and that M. de Rémusat was appointed Prefect of Haute-Garonne, by a decree of the 12th of July, 1815. This appointment was quite to the taste of my grandfather, for it placed him once more in office, without involving him in the parade of a Court; but it was less pleasing to his wife, who regretted Paris and her old friends there, and who dreaded the disturbances at Toulouse, at that time a prey to the violence of southern Royalism—"the White Terror," as it was then called.

The new Prefect immediately set out for Toulouse, and was greeted on his arrival with the news that General Ramel, notwithstanding that he had hoisted the white flag on the Capitol, had been assassinated. Such is the injustice and violence of party spirit, even when victorious; nay, especially when victorious!

But, however interesting this episode of our national troubles may be, it is not necessary to dwell on them here. The principal personage in these Memoirs is not the Prefect, but Madame de Rémusat. My grandmother, anxious about the course of events, and perhaps afraid of the vehemence of her son's opinions, which were little suited to his father's official position, sent him back to Paris, to his great satisfaction.

Then ensued a correspondence between them which will make both of them known to us, and will perhaps depict the writer of these Memoirs more clearly than do the Memoirs themselves.

As, however, the latter work only is in question at present, it is not necessary to give in detail the history of the period subsequent to 1815. The administration of the department, which commenced under such gloomy auspices, was, for a period of nineteen months, extremely difficult. While the son, mixing in very Liberal society in Paris, adopted the opinions of advanced consti-

tutional Royalism, which did little more than tolerate the Bourbons, the father, amid totally different surroundings, underwent a similar mental process, and placed himself by word and deed in the front rank of those officials of the King's Government who were the least Royalist and the most Liberal. He was a just and moderate man, a lover of law, neither an aristocrat nor a bigot. The people of Toulouse were all that he was not; nevertheless he was successful there, and left behind him a kindly memory, which lapsed as the men of his time disappeared, but of which my father has more than once found traces. These early days of constitutional liberty, even in a province which did not afterwards put its theories boldly in practice, are curious to contemplate.

The light of that liberty illumined all that the Empire had left in darkness. Opinions, ideas, hatred, passions, came to life. The Government of the Bourbons was represented by a married priest, M. de Talleyrand, and a regicide Jacobin, M. Fouché; but even they could not oppose the reactionary tendency of the time, and the Liberal policy did not triumph until the accession of MM. Decazes, Pasquier, Molé, and Royer-Collard to the Ministry, and the passing of the famous decree of the 5th of September. The new policy was of course advantageous to those who had practised it beforehand, and there could be

no ill will towards the Prefect on account of the failure of the Liberal party in the elections of Haute-Garonne. So soon as the Ministry was firmly established, and M. Lainé had succeeded M. de Vaublanc, my grandfather was appointed Prefect of Lille. My father records in a letter already quoted the effect of these events on the mind of Madame de Rémusat :—

"The nomination of my father to Lille brought my mother back into the midst of the great stir of public opinion, which was soon to declare itself as it had not done since 1789. Her intelligence, her reason, all her feelings and all her convictions, were about to make a great step in advance. The Empire, after awakening her interest in public affairs and enabling her to understand them, subsequently directed her mind towards a high moral aim, by inspiring her with a horror of tyranny. Hence came her desire for a government of order, founded on law, reason, and the spirit of the nation —hence a certain leaning towards the forms of the English Constitution. Her stay at Toulouse and the reaction of 1815 gave her such a knowledge of social realities as she could never have acquired in the salons of Paris, enlightening her as to the results and the causes of the Revolution, and the needs and sentiments of the nation. She understood, in a general way, on which side lay true help, strength, life, and right. She learned that a new

France had been called into existence, and what it was, and that it was for and by this new France that government must be carried on."

VI.

My grandmother's stay at Lille was occasionally varied by visits to her son in Paris. The pleasures of society were but a prelude to the literary success that he achieved a few months later, and indeed he was already practising composition in his frequent letters to his mother on politics and literature. Madame de Rémusat had more leisure at Lille than in Paris, and although her health was still delicate, she indulged her taste for intellectual pursuits. Hitherto she had written nothing but the Memoirs that she had afterwards destroyed, and a few short tales and essays. In the leisure of a country life she now attempted a romance in the form of letters, called "Les Lettrés Espagnols, ou l'Ambiteux." While she was working at this with ardour and success, the posthumous work of Madame de Staël, "Considérations sur la Révolution Française," came out, in 1818, and made a great impression on her. Now that sixty years have elapsed, it is difficult for us to realize the extraordinary effect of Madame de Staël's eloquent dissertation on the principles of the Revolution. The opinions of the author, then quite novel, are now merely noble truisms obvious to all. But in

the days that immediately followed the Empire, they were something more. Everything was then new, and the younger generation, who had undergone twenty years of tyranny, had to learn over again that which their fathers had known so well in 1789.

My grandmother was especially struck by the eloquent pages in which the author gives somewhat declamatory expression to her hatred of Napoleon. Madame de Rémusat felt a certain sympathy with the author's sentiments, but she could not forget that at one time she had thought differently. People who are fond of writing are easily tempted into explaining their conduct and feelings on paper. She conceived a strong desire to arrange all her reminiscences, to describe the Empire as she had seen it, and how she had at first loved and admired, next condemned and dreaded, afterwards suspected and hated, and finally renounced it. The Memoirs she had destroyed in 1815 would have been the most accurate exposition of this succession of events, situations, and feelings. It was vain to think of rewriting them, but it was possible, with the help of a good memory and an upright intention, to compose others which should be equally sincere. Full of this project, she wrote to her son (27th of May, 1818):—

"I have taken up a new notion. You must know that I wake every morning at six o'clock, and

that I write regularly from that hour until half-past nine. Well, I was sitting up with the manuscript of my 'Lettrés Espagnols' all scattered about me, when certain chapters of Madame de Staël's book came into my head. I flung my romance aside, and took up a clean sheet of paper, bitten with the idea that I must write about Bonaparte. On I went, describing the death of the Duke d'Enghien and that dreadful week I spent at Malmaison, and as I am an emotional person, I seemed to be living all through that time over again. Words and events came back of themselves; between yesterday and to-day I have written twenty pages, and am somewhat agitated in consequence."

The same circumstance which reawakened the recollections of the mother aroused the literary tastes of the son, and while he was publishing an article on Madame de Staël in the *Archives*,* his first appearance in print, he wrote as follows to his mother on the same date, 27th of May, 1818. Their respective letters crossed on the road:—

"'All honour to the sincere!' This book, my dear mother, has renewed my regret that you have burned your Memoirs, and has made me most anxious that

* *Archives Philosophiques, Politiques et Littéraires*, vol. v. Paris, 1818. My father reprinted this article in the collection entitled "Critiques et Études Littéraires, ou Passé et Présent," par Ch. de Rémusat. 2 vol. in-13. Paris, 1857.

you should retrieve that loss. You really owe this to yourself, to us, to the interests of truth. Read up the old almanacks; study the *Moniteur* page by page; get back your old letters from your friends, and go over them, especially those to my father. Try to remember not only the details of events, but your own impressions of them. Try to resuscitate the views you formerly held, even the illusions you have lost; recall your very errors. Show how you, with many other honourable and sensible people, indignant and disgusted with the horrors of the Revolution, were carried away by natural aversion, and beguiled by enthusiasm for one man, which was in reality highly patriotic. Explain how we had all of us become, as it were, strangers to political life. We had no dread of the empire of an individual; we went out to meet it. Then show how this man either became corrupt, or else displayed his true character as his power increased. Tell how it unfortunately happened that as you lost one by one your illusions concerning him, you became more and more dependent, and how the less you submitted to him in heart, the more you were obliged to obey him in fact; how at last, after having believed in the uprightness of his policy because you were mistaken in himself, your discovery of his true character led you to a correct view of his system, and how moral indignation finally brought you by degrees to

what I may call a *political hatred* of him. This, my dear mother, is what I entreat of you to do. You see what I mean, do you not? and you will do it."

Two days after, on the 30th of May, my grandmother replied as follows :—

"Is it not wonderful how perfectly we understand each other? I am reading the book, and I am as much struck by it as you are. I regret my poor Memoirs for new reasons, and I take up my pen again, without quite knowing whither it will lead me; for, my dear child, this task which you have set me, and which of itself is tempting, is also formidable. I shall, however, set about reviving my impressions of certain epochs, at first without order or sequence, just as things come back to me. You may trust me to set down the very truth. Yesterday, when I was alone and at my desk, I was trying to recall my first meeting with this wretched man. A tide of remembrance rushed over me, and that which you so justly call my *political* hatred was ready to fade away and give place to my former illusions."

A few days later, on the 8th of June, 1818, she dwells on the difficulties of her task :—

"Do you know that I need all my courage to do as you tell me? I am like a person who, having spent ten years at the galleys, is asked to write an account of how he passed his time. My heart sinks when I

recall old memories. There is pain both in my past fancies, and in my present feelings. You are right in saying I love truth; but it follows that I cannot, like so many others, recall the past with impunity, and I assure you that, for the last week, I have risen quite saddened from the desk at which you and Madame de Staël have placed me. I could not reveal these feelings to any one but you. Others would not understand, and would only laugh at me."

On the 28th of September and the 8th of October of the same year, she writes to her son:—

"If I were a man, I should certainly devote a part of my life to studying *La Ligue*; being only a woman, I confine myself to verbal utterances about you know whom. What a man! what a man! It terrifies me to retrace it all. It was my misfortune to be very young when I was placed near him; I did not reflect on what passed before me; but now that we are both older, I and the generation to which I belong, my memories move me more than did events at that time. If you come . . . I think you will find that I have not lost much time this summer. I have already written nearly five hundred pages, and I am going to write much more; the task lengthens as I work at it. Afterwards much time and patience will be required to put all this material in order. Perhaps I shall never have either one or the other; if so, that will be your business when I shall be no longer here. . . ."

"Your father," she writes again, "says that he does not know of any one to whom I could show what I am writing. He declares that no one excels me in 'the talent for being true,' as he expresses it. So, therefore, I write for nobody in particular. Some day you will find my manuscripts among my effects, and you can do what you like with them." On the 8th of October, 1818, she writes :—"There is a thought that sometimes troubles me. I say to myself, 'Suppose some day my son publishes this, what will be said of me?' Then the fear seizes me that I shall be held to have been malicious, or at least ill-natured, and I rack my brain for something to praise. But this man (Bonaparte) was such a ruthless destroyer of all worth, and we were brought so low, that I am straitened by the demands of truth, and I grow quite disheartened."

These fragments of her letters indicate the spirit in which the Memoirs of Madame de Rémusat were written; and it was not that of a literary pastime, nor a pleasure of the imagination. Her motive was neither ambition to be an author, nor the desire to put forward an apology. The love of truth, the political spectacle before her eyes, and the influence of a son who became day by day more strongly confirmed in those Liberal opinions which were destined to be the delight and the honour of his life —these things gave her courage to persevere in her

task for more than two years. She understood that noble policy which places the rights of man above the rights of the State. Nor was this all. As often happens to persons deeply engaged in intellectual work, her task became plain and easy, and she led a more active life than at any previous time. In spite of failing health, she constantly travelled from Lille to Paris; she acted the part of Elmire in "Tartuffe" at M. Molé's house at Champlâtreux; she commenced a work on the Women of the Seventeenth Century, which she afterwards expanded into her "Essai sur l'Education des Femmes;" she supplied Dupuytren with material for a panegyric on Corvisart, and she even published a tale in the *Lycée Français.**

In the midst of the happiness which she derived from her quiet life and her busy mind, from her husband's official and her son's literary success, her health failed. First came a weakness of the eyes, which, without actually threatening her sight, occasioned her both pain and inconvenience; then followed a general delicacy of the system, in which the stomach was chiefly affected. After alternate changes for the better and the worse, her son brought her to Paris on the 28th of November, 1821, in a suffering condition—which was alarming to those who

* *Lycée Français, ou Mélange de Littérature et de Critique*, t. iii. p. 281 (1820).

loved her, but did not appear to the doctors to indicate immediate danger. Broussais, however, took a desponding view of her case, and my father was then first struck by the power of induction to which the discoveries and the errors of that eminent man are alike due. Notwithstanding her illness, she occupied herself, on her return to Lille, with literary and historical work, and received company, including a great number of political personages. She was still able to feel interested in the fall of the Duke Decazes, and she foresaw that the coming into power of M. de Villèle—that is to say, of the Ultras or Reactionaries, as they are now called—would render it impossible for her husband to retain the Prefecture of Lille; and, in fact, he was superseded on the 9th of January, 1822. Before this occurred, Madame de Rémusat was no more. She expired suddenly in the night, the 16th of December, 1821, aged forty-one years.

She bequeathed to her son a lifelong sorrow, and to her friends the memory of a remarkable and charming woman. Not one of those friends is now living; M. Pasquier, M. Molé, M. Guizot, and M. Leclerc have recently passed away. I render her memory the truest homage in my power by the publication of these unfinished Memoirs, which, with the exception of a few chapters, she was unable to read over or correct. The work was to have been divided

into five parts, corresponding with five distinct epochs. She completed only three, which treat of the interval between 1802 and 1808; that is to say, from her first appearance at Court to the breaking out of the war in Spain. The unwritten portions would have described the period that elapsed between that war and the divorce (1808–1809), and the five following years, ending with the fall of the Emperor. I am well aware that a work of the nature of this one is calculated to bring down upon both its author and its editor much blame, many insinuations, and a great deal of political animosity. Its apparent contradictions will be held up to observation, rather than the interesting analogy of the opinions of three generations which it sets forth, and the difference in the times. It will be a theme for wonder that any man could be a Chamberlain and any woman a Lady-in-Waiting, and yet that both could be so far from servile, so liberal, so little shocked by the 18th Brumaire, so patriotic, so much fascinated by that man of genius, Bonaparte, and so severe upon his faults, so clear-sighted respecting the majority of the members of the Imperial family, so indulgent or so blind with regard to others who have left an equally fatal impress on our national history. It will, however, be difficult to avoid doing justice to the sincerity, the honesty, and the intelligence of the author, or to read the book without deriving from it

an increased aversion to absolute power, a keener perception of its sophistry, and the hollowness of the apparent prosperity with which it dazzles public opinion. These impressions I have especially derived from it, and I desire to retain them. It would have been sufficient Preface to this book had I written only those words which my father uttered, sixty years ago, when, on reading Madame de Staël, he asked his mother to tell him the story of the cruel years of the first Empire: "All honour to the sincere!"

PAUL DE RÉMUSAT.

MEMOIRS OF
MADAME DE RÉMUSAT.

INTRODUCTION.

PORTRAITS AND ANECDOTES.

BEFORE I enter upon my own recollections, I think it well to make some preliminary observations on the Emperor and the various members of his family. By doing so the difficult task I am about to undertake will be facilitated, and I shall be assisted in recalling the impressions of the last twelve years. I will begin with Bonaparte himself. I do not pretend that he always appeared to me in the light in which I see him now; my opinions have altered, even as he has altered; but I am so far from being influenced by personal feeling, that I am certain I shall not for a moment deviate from the exact truth.

Napoleon Bonaparte is of low stature, and ill-made; the upper part of his body is too long in proportion to his legs. He has thin chestnut hair, his eyes are greyish blue, and his skin, which was yellow

whilst he was slight, has become of late years a dead white without any colour. His forehead, the setting of his eye, the line of his nose—are all beautiful, and remind one of an antique medallion; his mouth, which is thin-lipped, becomes pleasant when he laughs; the teeth are regular; his chin is short, and his jaw heavy and square; he has well-formed hands and feet: I mention them particularly, because he thought a good deal of them.

He has an habitual slight stoop; his eyes are dull, giving to his face a melancholy and meditative expression when in repose.* When he is angry his looks are fierce and menacing. Laughter becomes him; it makes him look more youthful, and less formidable. When he laughs, his countenance improves. He was always simple in his dress, and generally wore the uniform of his own guard. He was cleanly rather from habit than from a liking for cleanliness; he bathed often, sometimes in the middle of the night, because he thought the practice good for his health. Otherwise, the precipitation with which he did everything did not admit of his

* Madame de Rémusat wrote her Memoirs for the second time while the Emperor Napoleon I. was still living. She therefore writes of him on some occasions in the present, on others in the past tense. Although this peculiarity produces a certain confusion of style, as it is characteristic of the work, the translators have not thought it right to suppress it entirely. They have, however, adopted the past tense in cases where the use of the present would lead to confusion.

clothes being put on carefully; and on gala days and full-dress occasions, his attendants were obliged to consult together as to when they might snatch a moment to dress him.

He could not endure the wearing of ornaments; the slightest constraint was insupportable to him. He would tear off or break anything that gave him the least annoyance, and the poor valet who had occasioned him a passing inconvenience would receive violent proofs of his anger. I have said there was fascination in the smile of Bonaparte; but, during all the time when I was in the habit of seeing him constantly, he rarely put forth that charm. Gravity was at the bottom of his character; not the gravity of a dignified and noble manner, but that which arises from profound thought. In his youth he was a dreamer, later in life he became a moody, and, later still, an habitually ill-tempered man. When I first began to know him well, he was exceedingly fond of all that leads to reverie—of Ossian, of the twilight, of melancholy music. I have seen him enraptured by the murmur of the wind, I have heard him talk with enthusiasm of the moaning of the sea, and he was tempted sometimes to believe that nocturnal apparitions were not beyond the bounds of possibility; in fact, he had a leaning towards superstition. When, on leaving his study in the evening, he went into Madame Bona-

parte's drawing-room, he would sometimes have the candles shaded, desire us to keep profound silence, and amuse himself by telling or listening to ghost stories; or he would have soft, sweet music executed by Italian singers, and accompanied only by a few instruments lightly touched. Then he would fall into a reverie which we all respected, no one venturing to stir, or to change his or her place. When he aroused himself from that state, which seemed to procure him a sort of repose, he was generally more serene and communicative. He liked to talk at such times about the sensations he had experienced. He would explain the effect music had upon him; he always preferred that of Paisiello, because he said it was monotonous, and that only impressions which repeat themselves take possession of us. The geometrical turn of his mind disposed him to analyze even his emotions. No man has ever meditated more deeply than Bonaparte on the "wherefore" that rules human actions. Always aiming at something, even in the least important acts of his life, always assigning a secret motive for each of them to himself, he could never understand that natural carelessness which leads some persons to act without a project and without an aim. He judged others by himself, and was often mistaken; his conclusions and the actions which ensued upon them alike proving erroneous.

Bonaparte was deficient in education and in manners; it seemed as if he must have been destined either to live in a tent where all men are equal, or upon a throne where everything is permitted. He did not know how either to enter or to leave a room; he did not know how to make a bow, how to rise, or how to sit down. His questions were abrupt, and so also was his manner of speech. Spoken by him, Italian loses all its grace and sweetness. Whatever language he speaks, it always sounds like a foreign tongue; he appears to force it to express his thoughts. And, as any rigid rule becomes an insupportable annoyance to him, and every liberty which he takes pleases him as though it were a victory, he would never yield to grammar. He used to say that in his youth he had liked reading romances as well as studying the exact sciences; and probably he was influenced by so incongruous a mixture. Unfortunately, he had met with the worst of the former kind of books, and retained so keen and pleasant a remembrance of them, that when he married the Archduchess Marie Louise, he gave her "Hippolyte, Comte de Douglas," and "Les Contemporains," * so that, as he said, she might form an idea of refined feeling, and also of the customs of society.

In trying to depict Bonaparte, it would be necessary, if one were to follow the analytical forms of

* "Les Contemporains" was a romance, or rather a series of stories or portraits, by Rétif de la Bretonne.

which he was so fond, to separate into three distinct parts his soul, his heart, and his mind, for no one of these ever blended completely with the others. Although remarkable for certain intellectual qualities, no man, it must be allowed, was ever less lofty of soul. There was no generosity, no true greatness in him. I have never known him to admire, I have never known him to comprehend, a fine action. He always regarded every indication of a good feeling with suspicion; he did not value sincerity, and he did not hesitate to say that he recognized the superiority of a man by the greater or less dexterity with which he practised the art of lying. On the occasion of his saying this, he added, with great complacency, that, when he was a child, one of his uncles had predicted of him that he should govern the world, because he was an habitual liar. "M. de Metternich," he added, "approaches to being a statesman—he lies very well."

Bonaparte's methods of government were all selected from among those which have a tendency to debase men. He dreaded the ties of affection; he endeavoured to isolate every one; he never sold a favour without awakening a sense of uneasiness, for he held that the true way to attach the recipient to himself was by compromising him, and often even by blasting him in public opinion. He could not pardon virtue until he had suc-

ceeded in weakening its effect by ridicule. He cannot be said to have truly loved glory, for he never hesitated to prefer success; thus, although he was audacious in good fortune, and pushed it to its utmost limits, he was timid and troubled when threatened with reverses. Of generous courage he was not capable; and, indeed, on that head one would hardly venture to tell the truth so plainly as he has told it himself, by an admission recorded in an anecdote which I have never forgotten. One day, after his defeat at Leipsic, and when, as he was about to return to Paris, he was occupied in collecting the remains of his army for the defence of our frontiers, he was talking to M. de Talleyrand of the ill success of the Spanish war, and of the difficulty in which it had involved him. He spoke openly of his own position, not with the noble frankness that does not fear to own a fault, but with that mighty sense of superiority which releases one from the necessity of dissimulation. In the midst of this plain speaking, M. de Talleyrand said to him suddenly, "But how is this? You consult me as if you and I had not quarrelled."

Bonaparte answered, "Ah, circumstances! circumstances! Let us leave the past and the future alone. I want to hear what you think of the present moment."

"Well," replied M. de Talleyrand, "there is only

one thing you can do. You have made a mistake: you must say so; try to say so nobly. Proclaim, therefore, that being a king by the choice of the people, elected by the nations, it has never been your design to set yourself against them. Say that when you began the war with Spain, you believed you were about to deliver the people from the yoke of an odious minister, who was encouraged by the weakness of his prince; but that perceiving, on closer observation, that the Spaniards, although aware of the faults of their king, are none the less attached to his dynasty, you are about to restore it to them, so that it may not be said you have opposed a national aspiration. After that proclamation, restore King Ferdinand to liberty, and withdraw your troops. Such an avowal, made in a lofty tone, and when the enemy are yet hesitating on our frontier, can only do you honour, and you are still too strong for it to be regarded as a cowardly act."

"A cowardly act!" replied Bonaparte; "what does that matter to me? Understand that I should not fail to commit one, if it were useful to me. In reality, there is nothing really noble or base in this world; I have in my character all that can contribute to secure my power, and to deceive those who think they know me. Frankly, I am base, essentially base. I give you my word that I should

feel no repugnance to commit what would be called by the world a dishonourable action; my secret tendencies, which are, after all, those of nature, apart from certain affectations of greatness which I have to assume, give me infinite resources with which to baffle every one. Therefore, all I have to do now is to consider whether your advice agrees with my present policy, and to try and find out besides," added he, with a satanic smile, "whether you have not some private interest in urging me to take this step."

Another anecdote which bears on the same characteristic will not be out of place here. Bonaparte, when on the point of setting out for Egypt, went to see M. de Talleyrand, then Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Directory. "I was in bed, being ill," said M. de Talleyrand. "Bonaparte sat down near me, and imparted to me all the dreams of his youthful imagination. I was interested in him because of the activity of his mind, and also on account of the obstacles which I was aware would be placed in his way by secret enemies of whom I knew. He told me of the difficulty in which he was placed for want of money, and that he did not know where to get any. 'Stay,' I said to him; 'open my desk. You will find there a hundred thousand francs belonging to me. They are yours for the present; you may repay the money when you return.' Bonaparte

threw himself on my neck, and I was really delighted to witness his joy. When he became Consul, he repaid me the money I had lent him; but he asked me one day, 'What interest could you have had in lending me that money? I have thought about it a hundred times since then, and have never been able to make out your object.' 'I had none,' I replied. 'I was feeling very ill: it was quite possible I might never see you again; but you were young, you had impressed me very strongly, and I felt impelled to render you a service without any after-thought whatsoever.' 'In that case,' said Bonaparte, 'and if it was really done without any design, you acted a dupe's part.'"

According to the order I have laid down, I ought now to speak of Bonaparte's heart; but if it were possible to believe that a being, in every other way similar to ourselves, could exist without that portion of our organization which makes us desire to love and to be loved, I should say that in his case the heart was left out. Perhaps, however, the truth was that he succeeded in suppressing it completely. He was always too much engrossed by himself to be influenced by any sentiment of affection, no matter of what kind. He almost ignored the ties of blood and the rights of nature; I do not know that even paternity weighed with him: at least, he did not regard it as his primary relation to his

son. One day, at breakfast, when, as was often the case, Talma had been admitted to see him, the young Napoleon was brought to him. The Emperor took the child on his knee, and, far from caressing, amused himself by slapping him, though not so as to hurt him; then, turning to Talma, he said, "Talma, tell me what I am doing?" Talma, as may be supposed, did not know what to say. "You do not see it," continued the Emperor; "I am slapping a king!"

Notwithstanding his habitual hardness, Bonaparte was not entirely without experience of love. But, good heavens! what manner of sentiment was it in his case? A sensitive person forgets self in love, and becomes almost transformed, but to a man of the stamp of Bonaparte it only meant an additional object of despotism. The Emperor despised women, and contempt cannot exist together with love. He regarded their weakness as an unanswerable proof of their inferiority, and the power they have acquired in society as an intolerable usurpation—a result and an abuse of the progress of that civilization which, as M. de Talleyrand said, was always his personal enemy. On this account Bonaparte was under restraint in the society of women; and as every kind of restraint put him out of humour, he was awkward in their presence, and never knew how to talk to them. It is true that the women with whom

he was acquainted were not calculated to change his views of the sex. We may easily imagine the nature of his youthful experiences. In Italy morals were utterly depraved, and the general licentiousness was augmented by the presence of the French army. When he returned to France society was entirely broken up and dispersed. The circle that surrounded the Directory was a corrupt one, and the Parisians to whose society he was admitted—the wives of men of business and contractors—were vain and frivolous women. When he became Consul, and made his generals and his aides-de-camp marry, or ordered them to bring their wives to Court, the only women he had about him were newly married, timid, and silent girls, or the wives of his former comrades, suddenly withdrawn from obscurity by the good fortune of their husbands, and ill able to conform to the change in their position.

I am disposed to believe that Bonaparte, almost always exclusively occupied by politics, was never awakened to love except by vanity. He thought nothing of a woman, except while she was beautiful, or at least young. He would probably have been willing to subscribe to the doctrine that, in a well-organized country, we should be killed—just as certain kinds of insects are destined by nature to a speedy death, so soon as they have accomplished the task of maternity. Yet Bonaparte had some affection

for his first wife; and if he was ever really stirred by any emotion, it was by her and for her. Even a Bonaparte cannot completely escape from all human influence, and a man's character is made up, not of what he is always, but of what he is most frequently.

Bonaparte was a young man when he first made the acquaintance of Madame de Beauharnais, who was greatly superior to the rest of the circle in which she moved, both by reason of the name she bore, and from the elegance of her manners. She attached herself to him, and flattered his pride; she procured him a step in rank: he became accustomed to associate the idea of her influence with every piece of good fortune which befell him. This superstition, which she kept up very cleverly, exerted great power over him for a long time; it even induced him more than once to delay the execution of his projects of divorce. When he married Madame de Beauharnais, Bonaparte believed that he was allying himself to a great lady; his marriage, therefore, was one conquest the more. I shall give further details of the charm she exercised over him, when I have to speak more particularly of her.

Notwithstanding his preference for her, I have seen him in love two or three times, and it was on those occasions that he exhibited the full measure of the despotism of his character. How irritated he became at the least obstacle! How roughly he put

aside the jealous remonstrances of his wife! "It is your place," he said, "to submit to all my fancies, and you ought to think it quite natural that I should allow myself amusements of this kind. I have a right to answer all your complaints by an eternal I. I am a person apart; I will not be dictated to by any one." But he soon began to desire to exercise an authority over the object of his passing preference equal to that by which he silenced his wife.

Astonished that any one should gain ascendancy over him, he speedily became angry with the audacious individual, and he would abruptly get rid of the object of his brief passion, having let the public into the transparent secret of his success.

The intellect of Bonaparte was most remarkable. It would be difficult, I think, to find, among men, a more powerful or comprehensive mind. It owed nothing to education; for, in reality, he was ignorant. He read but little, and that hurriedly; but he quickly seized upon the little he had learnt, and his imagination developed it so extensively that he might easily have passed for a well-educated man.

His intellectual capacity seemed to be vast, from the number of subjects he could take in and classify without fatigue. With him one idea gave birth to a thousand, and a word would lift his conversation into elevated regions of fancy, in which strict logic

did not indeed keep him company, but in which his intellect never failed to shine.

It was always a great pleasure to me to hear him talk, or rather to hear him hold forth, for his conversation was generally composed of long monologues; not that he objected to replies when he was in a good humour, but, for many reasons, it was not always easy to answer him. His Court, which for a long time was entirely military, listened to his least word with the respect that is paid to the word of command, and afterwards it became so numerous, that any individual undertaking to refute him, or to carry on a dialogue with him, felt like an actor before an audience. I have said that he spoke badly, but his language was generally animated and brilliant; his grammatical inaccuracies sometimes gave his sentences an unexpected strength, which well became the originality of his ideas. He required no interlocutor to warm him up. He would dash into a subject, and go on for a long time, but he was careful to notice whether he was listened to, and pleased with those who comprehended and applauded him. To listen to him attentively was a sure and easy method of pleasing him. Like an actor who becomes excited by the effect he produces, Bonaparte enjoyed the admiration he watched for closely in the faces of his audience. I remember well that, because he interested me very much when

he spoke, and I listened to him with pleasure, he proclaimed me a woman of intellect, although at the time I had not addressed two consecutive sentences to him.

He was very fond of talking about himself, and criticised himself on certain points, just as another person might have done. Rather than fail to make the most out of his own character, he would not have hesitated to subject it to the most searching analysis. He used to say that a real politician knows how to calculate even the smallest profits to be made out of his defects; and M. de Talleyrand carried that reflection even further.

I once heard him say, "That devil of a man deceives one on all points. His very passions mislead, for he manages to disguise them even when they really exist." I remember one incident which will show how, when he thought proper, he could pass from complete calm to violent anger.

A little while before our last rupture with England, a rumour arose that war was about to recommence, and that the ambassador, Lord Whitworth, was preparing to leave Paris. Once a month the First Consul was in the habit of receiving the ambassadors and their wives in Madame Bonaparte's apartments. This reception was held with great pomp. The foreigners were ushered into a drawing-room, and when they were all there, the First Consul

would appear, accompanied by his wife; and attended by a prefect of the palace, and a lady-in-waiting. To each of them the ambassadors and their wives were introduced by name. Madame Bonaparte would take a seat; the First Consul would keep up the conversation for a longer or a shorter time, according to his convenience, and then withdraw with a slight bow.

A few days before the breach of the peace, the Corps Diplomatique met as usual at the Tuileries. Whilst they were waiting, I went to Madame Bonaparte's apartment, and entered the dressing-room, where she was finishing her toilet.

The First Consul was sitting on the floor, playing with little Napoleon, the eldest son of his brother Louis. He presently began to criticise his wife's dress, and also mine, giving us his opinion on every detail of our costume. He seemed to be in the best possible humour. I remarked this, and said to him that, judging by appearances, the letters the ambassadors would have to write, after the approaching audience, would breathe nothing but peace and concord. Bonaparte laughed, and went on playing with his little nephew.

By-and-by he was told that the company had arrived. Then he rose quickly, the good humour vanished from his face, and I was struck by the severe expression that suddenly replaced it: he seemed to

grow pale at will, his features contracted; and all this in less time than it takes me to describe it. "Let us go, mesdames," said he abruptly, and he walked on quickly, entered the drawing-room, and, without bowing to any one, advanced to the English ambassador. To him he began to complain bitterly of the proceedings of his Government. His anger seemed to increase every minute; it soon reached a height which terrified the assembly; the hardest words, the most violent threats, came from his quivering lips. No one dared to move. Madame Bonaparte and I looked at each other, dumb with astonishment, and every one stood aghast. The impassive Englishman himself was disconcerted, and it was with difficulty he could find words to answer.

Another anecdote* which sounds strange, but is very characteristic, proves how completely he could command himself when he chose to do so.

When he was travelling, or even during a campaign, he frequently indulged in gallantries which he regarded as a short respite from business or battles. On the occasion of his first entry into

* The Abbé de Pradt relates that on one occasion, after a violent scene the Emperor came to him and said, "You thought me terribly angry? Undeceive yourself; with me anger never goes beyond this." He passed his hand across his throat, thus indicating that his passion never rose high enough to disturb his head.

Poland, Murat, who had preceded him to Warsaw, was ordered to find for the Emperor, who would shortly arrive, a young and pretty mistress, and to select her from among the nobility. He acquitted himself cleverly of this commission, and induced a noble young Polish lady, who was married to an old man, to accept the position.

No one knows what means he employed, or what were his promises; but at last the lady consented to go to the castle near Warsaw, where the Emperor was lodged.

The fair one arrived at her destination rather late. She has herself narrated this adventure, and she acknowledges that, as we can readily believe, she arrived agitated and trembling.

The Emperor was in his cabinet. The lady's arrival was announced to him; but, without disturbing himself, he ordered her to be conducted to her apartment, and offered supper and a bath, adding that afterwards she might retire to rest if she chose. Then he quietly went on writing until a late hour at night.

At last, his business being finished, he proceeded to the apartment where he had been so long waited for, and presented himself with all the manner of a master who disdains useless preliminaries. Without losing a moment, he began a singular conversation on the political situation of Poland, questioning the

young lady as if she had been a police agent, and demanding some very circumstantial information respecting the great Polish nobles who were then in Warsaw. He inquired particularly into their opinions, and their present interests, and prolonged this extraordinary interrogatory for a long time. The astonishment of a woman twenty years of age, who was not prepared for such a cross-examination, may be imagined. She answered him as well as she could, and only when she could tell him no more, did he seem to remember that Murat had promised, in his name, an interview of a more tender nature.

This extraordinary wooing did not, however, prevent the young Polish lady from becoming attached to the Emperor, for their *liaison* was prolonged during several campaigns. Afterwards the fair Pole came to Paris, where a son was born, who became the object of the hopes of Poland, the rallying point of Polish dreams of independence.

I saw his mother when she was presented at the Imperial Court, where she at first excited the jealousy of Madame Bonaparte; but after the divorce she became the intimate friend of the repudiated Empress at Malmaison, whither she often brought her son. It is said that she was faithful to the Emperor in his misfortunes, and that she visited him more than once at the Isle of Elba. He found her

again in France, when he made his last and fatal appearance there. But, after his second fall (I do not know at what time she became a widow), she married again, and she died in Paris this year (1818). I had these details from M. de Talleyrand.

I will now resume my sketch. Bonaparte carried selfishness so far that it was not easy to move him about anything that did not concern himself. He was, however, occasionally surprised, as it were, into impulses of tenderness; but they were fleeting, and always ended in ill-humour. It was not uncommon to see him moved even to the point of shedding a few tears; they seemed to arise from nervous irritation, of which they became the crisis. "I have," he said, "very unmanageable nerves, and at these times, if my blood did not always flow slowly, I think I should be very likely to go mad." I know, indeed, from Corvisart, that his pulse beat more slowly than is usual for a man's. Bonaparte never felt what is commonly called giddiness, and he always said that the expression, "My head is going round," conveyed no meaning to him. It was not only because he always yielded to his impulses, that he frequently used language which was painful and distressing to those whom he addressed, but also because he felt a secret pleasure in exciting fear, and in harassing the more or less trembling individuals before him. He held that uncer-

tainty stimulates zeal, and therefore he rarely displayed satisfaction with either persons or things. Admirably served, always obeyed on the moment, he would still find fault, and keep everybody in the palace in dread of his displeasure about some small detail. If the easy flow of his conversation had established for the time a sense of ease, he would suddenly imagine that it might be abused, and by a hard and imperious word he would put the person whom he had previously encouraged in his or her place—that is to say, in fear. He hated repose for himself and grudged it to others. When M. de Rémusat had arranged one of those magnificent fêtes in which all the arts were laid under contribution for his pleasure, I was never asked whether the Emperor was pleased, but whether he had grumbled more or less. His service was the severest of toil. He has been heard to say, in one of those moments when the strength of conviction appeared to weigh upon him, "The truly happy man is he who hides from me, away in the country, and when I die the world will utter a great '*ouf!*'"

I have said that Bonaparte was incapable of generosity; and yet his gifts were immense, and the rewards he bestowed gigantic. But when he paid for a service, he made it plain that he expected to buy another, and a vague uneasiness as to the conditions of the bargain always remained. There was also

a good deal of caprice in his gifts, so that they rarely excited gratitude. Moreover, he required that the money he distributed should all be expended, and he rather liked people to contract debt, because it kept them in a state of dependence. His wife gave him complete satisfaction in the latter particular, and he would never put her affairs in order, so that he might reserve the power of alarming her. At one time he allowed M. de Rémusat a considerable income, that we might keep what is called open house, and receive a great many foreigners. We were very exact in the first expenses demanded by a great establishment. A little while after, I had the misfortune to lose my mother, and was forced to close my house. The Emperor then rescinded all his gifts, on the ground that we could not keep the engagement we had made, and he left us in what was really a position of embarrassment, caused entirely by his fugitive and burdensome gifts. I pause here. If I carry out the plan I have formed, my memory, carefully consulted, will furnish me by degrees with other anecdotes which will complete this sketch. What I have already written suffices to convey an idea of the character of him with whom circumstances connected the best years of my life.

Bonaparte's Mother.

Madame Bonaparte (*née* Ramolini) was married, in 1767, to Charles Bonaparte, whose family was amongst the noble families of Corsica. It is said that there had been a *liaison* between her and M. de Marbœuf, governor of the island, and some went so far as to allege that Napoleon was the son of M. de Marbœuf: it is certain that he always took care of the Marbœuf family. However that may have been, the governor had Napoleon Bonaparte included among the number of noble children who were to be sent from Corsica to France, to be educated at a military school. He was placed at that of Brienne.

The English having become masters of Corsica in 1790, Madame Bonaparte, a rich widow, retired to Marseilles with her other children. Their education had been much neglected, and, if we are to accept the recollections of the Marseillais as evidence, her daughters had not been brought up under the strict rule of a scrupulous morality. The Emperor, indeed, never pardoned the town of Marseilles for having been aware of the position his family occupied at that period, and the disparaging anecdotes imprudently repeated by certain Provençals, seriously militated against the interests of the whole of Provence.

The widowed Madame Bonaparte established herself in Paris on her son's attainment of power. She lived a retired life, amassing as much money as possible; she meddled in no public matters, and neither had nor wished to have any influence. Her son overawed her, as he overawed everybody. She was a woman of very ordinary intelligence, who, notwithstanding the rank in which events placed her, never did anything worthy of remark. After the fall of the Empire, she retired to Rome, where she lives with her brother, Cardinal Fesch. It is said that, in the first Italian campaign, he eagerly profited by the opportunity of founding his fortune which then presented itself. He acquired, received, or even took, it is said, a considerable quantity of pictures, statues, and valuable articles, which have since served to decorate his various residences. When he afterwards became a cardinal and Archbishop of Lyons, he devoted himself wholly to the duties of his two great offices, and in the end he acquired a most honourable reputation among the clergy. He often opposed the Emperor while his disputes with the Pope were pending, and strongly resisted him on the occasion of the futile attempt to hold a council at Paris. Either for political reasons or from religious motives, he made some opposition to the divorce; at least, the Empress Josephine believed him to have done so. I shall

go more into details on this subject hereafter. The cardinal has, since his retirement to Rome, preserved the unvarying favour of the sovereign pontiff.*

Joseph Bonaparte.

Joseph Bonaparte was born in 1768. He has a handsome face, is fond of the society of women, and has always been remarkable for having better manners than any of his brothers. Like them, however, he affects astute duplicity. His ambition, although less developed than that of Napoleon, has nevertheless come out under certain circumstances, and he has always shown capacity enough to be master of the situations in which he has been placed, difficult though they have often been. In 1805, Bonaparte wished to make Joseph King of Italy, requiring him, however, to renounce all claim to the succession to the throne of France. This Joseph refused to do. He always adhered tenaciously to what he called his rights, and believed himself destined to give the French repose from the turmoil in which they were kept by the over-activity of his brother. He understood better than Napoleon how to carry a point by fair means, but he failed to inspire confidence. He is amiable in domestic life; but he did

* Madame Bonaparte, born in 1750, died in 1839. Cardinal Fesch, born at Ajaccio the 3rd of January, 1763, died at Rome the 13th of May, 1839.—P. R.

not exhibit much ability, either on the throne of Naples, or on that of Spain. It is true he was permitted to reign only as if he were Napoleon's lieutenant, and in neither country did he inspire personal esteem, or arouse animosity.*

His wife, the daughter of a Marseilles merchant, named Clary, is the simplest and the best woman in the world. Plain, common looking, timid and silent, she attracted no attention, either at the Emperor's Court, or when she wore successively those two crowns, which she has apparently lost without regret. There are two daughters by this marriage. The family is now established in America. The sister of Madame Joseph Bonaparte was married to General Bernadotte, now King of Sweden. She, who was not a commonplace person, had before her marriage been very much in love with Napoleon, and appears to have always preserved the memory of that feeling. It has been supposed that her hardly extinguished passion caused her obstinate refusal to leave France. She lives in Paris at present, in close retirement. †

* Joseph Bonaparte died at Florence, the 28th of July, 1844. —P. R.

† The Queen of Sweden died a few years ago, after having long lived in Paris in the Rue d'Anjou Saint Honoré.

Lucien Bonaparte.

Lucien Bonaparte has a great deal of ability. He displayed a taste for the arts and for certain kinds of literature at an early age. As a deputy from Corsica, some of his speeches in the Council of the Five Hundred were remarked at the time; amongst others, that which he made on the 22nd of September, 1798, the anniversary of the foundation of the Republic. He there defined the oath that each member of the Council ought to take—to watch over liberty and the constitution, and to execrate any Frenchman who should endeavour to re-establish royalty. On General Jourdan's expressing some fears, awakened by the rumour that the Council was menaced with a speedy overthrow, Lucien reminded them of the existence of a decree which pronounced outlawry on all who should attack the inviolability of the national representation. It is probable that all the time he had a secret understanding with his brother, and like him was awaiting the approach of the hour when they might lay the foundations of the elevation of their family. There were, however, some constitutional ideas in Lucien's head, and perhaps, if he had been able to preserve any influence over his brother, he might have opposed the indefinite growth of arbitrary power. He succeeded in sending information to Napoleon in Egypt of the

state of affairs in France, and having thus hastened his brother's return, he aided him effectually, as is well known, in the Revolution of the 10th Brumaire, 1799.

Lucien afterwards became Minister of the Interior, then ambassador to Spain, and in both capacities he gave offence to the First Consul. Bonaparte did not like to remember services which had been rendered to him, and Lucien was in the habit of reminding him of them, in an aggressive manner, during their frequent altercations.

While he was in Spain he became very intimate with the Prince de la Paix, and assisted to arrange the treaty of Badajoz,* which on that occasion saved Portugal from invasion.

He received a sum, which has been estimated at five hundred millions of francs, as a reward for his services. This was paid partly in money, and partly in diamonds. At this time he also formed a project of marriage between Bonaparte and an Infanta of Spain; but Napoleon, either from affection for his wife, or from fear of exciting the suspicions of the republicans, with whom he was still keeping on terms, rejected the idea of this marriage, which was to have been concluded through the agency of the Prince de la Paix.

In 1790, Lucien Bonaparte, who was then keeper

* 6th June, 1801.—P. R.

of the military stores near Toulon, had married the daughter of an innkeeper, who bore him two daughters, and died a few years later. The eldest of these two girls was in after years recalled to France by the Emperor, who, when he saw his affairs going badly in Spain, wished to treat for peace with the Prince of the Asturias, and to make him marry this daughter of Lucien's. But the young girl, who was placed under her grandmother's care, too frankly imparted in her letters to her father the impressions she received at her uncle's Court, and ridiculed the most important personages. Her letters were opened, and their contents so irritated the Emperor that he sent her back to Italy.

In 1803, Lucien, now a widower and entirely devoted to a life of pleasure, to which I might, indeed, give a harsher name, suddenly fell in love with Madame Jouberthon, the wife of a stock-broker. Her husband was promptly sent to Saint Domingo, where he died, and then this beautiful and clever woman managed to make Lucien marry her, notwithstanding the opposition of the First Consul. An open rupture took place between the two brothers on that occasion; Lucien left France in the spring of 1804, and established himself at Rome.

It is well known that since then he has devoted himself to the interests of the Pope, and has adroitly secured his protection; so much so that even now,

although he was recalled to Paris at the period of the fatal enterprise of 1815, he was permitted to return, after the second restoration of the king, to the Roman States, and to live quietly with the other members of his family who had retired thither. Lucien was born in 1775.*

Louis Bonaparte.

Louis Bonaparte, born in 1778, is a man concerning whom opinions have differed widely. His assumption of a stricter morality than that of other members of his family, his odd opinions—based, however, on daring theories rather than on solid principles—have deceived the world, and made for him a reputation different from that of his brothers. With much less talent than either Napoleon or Lucien, he has a touch of romance in his imagination, which he manages to combine with complete hardness of heart. Habitual ill health soured him in his youth, and added to the harsh melancholy of his disposition. I do not know whether, had he been left to himself, the ambition so natural to all his family would have been developed in him, but he has, at least, shown upon several occasions that he considered himself entitled to profit by the chances which circumstances have thrown in his way.

* Lucien Bonaparte died at Viterbo, 30th June, 1840.—P. R.

He has been applauded for wishing to govern Holland in the interests of the country, in spite of his brother's projects, and his abdication, although it was due to a whim rather than to generous feeling, has certainly done him honour. That is, after all, the best action of his life.

Louis Bonaparte is essentially egotistical and suspicious. In the course of these Memoirs he will become better known. Bonaparte said of him one day, "His feigned virtues give me almost as much trouble as Lucien's vices." He has retired to Rome since the downfall of his family.

Madame Josephine Bonaparte and Her Family.

The Marquis de Beauharnais, father of the general who was the first husband of Madame Bonaparte, having been employed in a military capacity at Martinique, became attached to an aunt of Madame Bonaparte's, with whom he returned to France, and whom he married in his old age.

This aunt brought her niece, Josephine de la Pagerie, to France. She had the girl educated, and also made use of her ascendancy over her aged husband, to marry her, at the age of fifteen years, to young Beauharnais, her stepson. Although he married her against his inclination, there is no doubt that at one time he was much attached to his

wife; for I have seen very loving letters written by him to her, when he was in garrison, and she preserved them with great care. Of this marriage were born Eugène and Hortense. When the Revolution began I think that Beauharnais' love for his wife had cooled. At the commencement of the Terror M. de Beauharnais still held his command in the French army, and had no longer any relations with his wife.

I do not know under what circumstances she became acquainted with certain deputies of the Convention, but she had influence with them, and as she was kind-hearted and obliging, she used it to do as much good to as many people as possible. From that time her reputation for good conduct was very much damaged; but her kindness, her grace, and the sweetness of her manners could not be disputed. She served my father's interests more than once with Barrère and Tallien, and owed to this my mother's friendship. In 1793 chance placed her in a village on the outskirts of Paris, where, like her, we were passing the summer. Our near neighbourhood led to some intimacy. I remember that Hortense, who was three or four years younger than I, used to visit me in my room, and, while amusing herself by examining my little trinkets, she would tell me that all her ambition for the future was to be the owner of a similar treasure.

Unhappy woman! She has since been laden with gold and diamonds, and how has she not groaned under the crushing weight of the royal diadem!

In those evil days when every one was forced to seek a place of safety from the persecution by which all classes of society were beset, we lost sight of Madame de Beauharnais. Her husband, being suspected by the Jacobins, had been thrown into prison in Paris, and condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal. She, also, was imprisoned, but escaped the guillotine, which preyed on all without distinction. Being a friend of the beautiful Madame Tallien, she was introduced into the society of the Directory, and was especially favoured by Barras. Madame de Beauharnais had very little fortune, and her taste for dress and luxury rendered her dependent on those who could aid her to indulge it. Without being precisely pretty, she possessed many personal charms. Her features were delicate, her expression was sweet; her mouth was very small, and concealed her bad teeth; her complexion was rather dark, but with the help of skilfully applied red and white she remedied that defect; her figure was perfect, her limbs were flexible and delicate; her movements were easy and elegant. La Fontaine's line could never have been more fitly applied than to her:

"Et la grace, plus belle encore que la beauté."

She dressed with perfect taste, enhancing the

beauty of what she wore; and with these advantages and the constant care bestowed upon her attire, she contrived to avoid eclipse by the youth and beauty of many of the women by whom she was surrounded.

To all this, as I have already said, she added extreme kindness of heart, a remarkably even temper, and great readiness to forget any wrong that had been done to her.

She was not a person of remarkable intellect. A Creole, and frivolous, her education had been a good deal neglected; but she was aware of her deficiencies and never made blunders in conversation. She possessed true natural tact; she readily found pleasant things to say: her memory was good—a useful quality for those in high position. Unhappily, she was deficient in depth of feeling and elevation of mind. She preferred to charm her husband by her beauty, rather than by the influence of certain virtues. She carried complaisance to excess for his sake, and kept her hold on him by concessions which, perhaps, contributed to increase the contempt with which he habitually regarded women. She might have taught him some useful lessons; but she feared him, and allowed him to dictate to her in everything. She was fickle, easy to move and easy to appease, incapable of lasting feeling, of sustained attention, of serious reflection, and although her greatness did not turn her head, neither did it

educate her. The bent of her character led her to compassionate the unfortunate; but she could only dwell on the troubles of individuals—she did not think of the woes of France. The genius of Bonaparte overawed her: she criticised him only in what concerned herself personally; in everything else she respected what he called "the force of his destiny." He exerted an evil influence over her, for he inspired her with contempt for morality, with a large share of his own characteristic suspicion, and he taught her the art of lying, which they both practised with skill and effect.

It is said that she was the prize of his command of the army of Italy; she has often assured me that at that time Bonaparte was really in love with her. She hesitated between him, General Hoche, and M. de Caulaincourt, who also loved her. Bonaparte prevailed. I know that my mother, then living in retirement in the country, was much surprised on learning that the widow of M. de Beauharnais was about to marry a man so little known as Bonaparte.

When I questioned her as to what Bonaparte was like in his youth, she told me that he was then dreamy, silent, and awkward in the society of women, but passionate and fascinating, although rather an odd person in every way. She charged the campaign in Egypt with having changed his temper, and deve-

loped that petty despotism from which she afterwards suffered so much.

I have seen letters from Napoleon to Madame Bonaparte, written at the time of the first Italian campaign. She accompanied him to Italy, but he sometimes left her with the rearguard of the army, until a victory had secured the safety of the road. These epistles are very singular. The writing is almost illegible; they are ill spelt; the style is strange and confused. But there is in them such a tone of passionate feeling; the expressions are so animated, and at the same time so poetical; they breathe a love so different from mere "amours," that there is no woman who would not have prized such letters. They formed a striking contrast with the graceful, elegant, and measured style of those of M. de Beauharnais. How strange it must have been for a woman to find herself one of the moving powers of the triumphant march of an army, at a time when politics alone governed the actions of men! On the eve of one of his greatest battles, Bonaparte wrote: "I am far from you! It seems to me that I am surrounded by the blackest night; I need the lurid light of the thunderbolts which we are about to hurl upon our enemies, to dispel the darkness into which your absence has thrown me. Josephine, you wept when I parted from you: you wept! At that thought all my being trembles.

But be consoled; Würmser shall pay dearly for the tears I have seen you shed." And on the morrow Würmser was beaten.

The enthusiasm with which General Bonaparte was received in beautiful Italy, the magnificence of the fêtes, the fame of his victories, the wealth which every officer might acquire there, the unbounded luxury in which she lived, accustomed Madame Bonaparte from that time forth to all the pomp with which she was afterwards surrounded; and she acknowledged that nothing in her life ever equalled the emotions of that time, when love came, or seemed to come daily to lay at her feet a new conquest over a people enraptured with their conqueror. It is, however, plain from these letters, that Madame Bonaparte, in the midst of this life of triumph, of victory and of licence, gave some cause for uneasiness to her victorious husband. His letters, sometimes sullen and sometimes menacing, reveal the torments of jealousy; and they abound in melancholy reflections, which betray his weariness of the fleeting delusions of life. It may have been that those misunderstandings, which wounded the first very keen feelings Bonaparte had ever experienced, had a bad effect upon him, and hardened him by degrees. Perhaps he would have been a better man if he had been more and better loved.

When, on his return from this brilliant campaign,

the conquering general was obliged to exile himself to Egypt, to escape from the growing suspicion of the Directory, Madame Bonaparte's position became precarious and difficult. Her husband entertained grave suspicions of her, inspired by Joseph and Lucien, who dreaded the powerful influence that she might exercise through her son, who had accompanied Bonaparte. Her extravagant tastes led her into reckless expense, and she was harassed by debts and duns.

Before leaving France, Bonaparte had directed her to purchase an estate; and as she wished to live in the neighbourhood of Saint Germain, where her daughter was being educated, she selected Malmaison. There we met her again, when we were residing for some months at the château of one of our friends,* at a short distance from Malmaison. Madame Bonaparte, who was naturally unreserved, and even indiscreet, no sooner met my mother again, than she talked to her very freely about her absent husband, about her brothers-in-law—in fact, about a host of people who were utter

* Madame de Vergennes was very intimate with M. Chanorier, a wealthy and intelligent man living at Croissy, on the bank of the Seine, and who was one of the first to introduce the merino sheep into France. It was from Croissy that she and her daughters made a neighbourly visit to Malmaison, and resumed with Madame Bonaparte their former intimacy with Madame de Beauharnais.

strangers to us. Bonaparte was supposed to be almost lost to France, and his wife was neglected. My mother took pity on her; we showed her some attention, which she never forgot. At that time I was seventeen years of age, and I had been married one year.

It was at Malmaison that Madame Bonaparte showed us an immense quantity of pearls, diamonds, and cameos, which constituted the contents of her jewel-case. Even at that time it might have figured in a story in the "Arabian Nights," and it was destined to receive immense accessions. Invaded and grateful Italy had contributed to these riches, and the Pope had also done so, as a mark of his appreciation of the respect with which the conqueror treated him by denying himself the pleasure of planting his flag upon the walls of Rome. The reception-rooms at Malmaison were sumptuously decorated with pictures, statues, and mosaics, the spoils of Italy, and each of the generals who figured in the Italian campaign exhibited booty of the same kind.

Although she was surrounded with all these treasures, Madame Bonaparte was often without money to meet her every-day expenses; and, to get out of this difficulty, she trafficked in her influence with the people in power at the time, and compromised herself by forming imprudent connections.

Dreadfully embarrassed, on worse terms than ever with her brothers-in-law, supplying too much ground for their accusations against her, and no longer counting on the return of her husband, she was strongly tempted to give her daughter in marriage to the son of Rewbell (a member of the Directory); but Mademoiselle de Beauharnais would not consent, and her opposition put an end to a project whose execution would doubtless have been highly displeasing to Bonaparte.

Presently a rumour of Bonaparte's arrival at Fréjus arose. He came back with his mind full of the evil reports that Lucien had repeated to him in his letters. His wife, on hearing of his disembarkation, set out to join him; she missed him, had to retrace her steps, and returned to their house in the Rue Chantereine some hours after his arrival there. She descended from her carriage in haste, followed by her son and daughter, and ran up the stairs leading to his room; but what was her surprise to find the door locked! She called to Bonaparte, and begged him to open it. He replied, through the door, that it should never again be opened for her. Then she wept, fell on her knees, implored him for her sake and that of her two children; but all in vain, the silence was unbroken, and several hours of the night passed over her in this dreadful suspense. At last, however, moved by her sobs and her per-

severance, Bonaparte opened the door at about four o'clock in the morning, and appeared, as Madame Bonaparte herself told me, with a stern countenance, which, however, betrayed that he too had been weeping. He bitterly reproached her with her conduct, her forgetfulness of him, all the real or imaginary sins of which Lucien had accused her, and concluded by announcing an eternal separation. Then turning to Eugène de Beauharnais, who was at that time about twenty years old—"As for you," he said, "you shall not bear the burden of your mother's faults. You shall be always my son; I will keep you with me."

"No, no, General," replied Eugène; "I must share the ill fortune of my mother, and from this moment I say farewell to you."

These words shook Bonaparte's resolution. He opened his arms to Eugène, weeping; his wife and Hortense knelt at his feet and embraced his knees; and, soon after, all was forgiven. In the explanation that ensued, Madame Bonaparte succeeded in clearing herself from the accusations of her brother-in-law; and Bonaparte, then burning to avenge her, sent for Lucien at seven o'clock in the morning, and had him, without any forewarning, ushered into the room where the husband and wife, entirely reconciled, occupied the same bed.

From that time Bonaparte desired his wife to break with Madame Tallien and all the society of the

Directory. The 18th Brumaire completely severed her connection with those individuals. She told me that on the eve of that important day she observed, with great surprise, that Bonaparte had loaded two pistols and placed them beside his bed. On her questioning him, he replied that a certain event might happen in the night which would render such a precaution necessary. Then, without another word, he lay down, and slept soundly until the next morning.

When he became Consul, the gentle and gracious qualities of his wife, which attracted many persons to his Court whom his natural rudeness would have otherwise kept away, were of great service to him. To Josephine he entrusted the measures to be taken for the return of the *émigrés*. Nearly all the "erasures" * passed through the hands of Madame Bonaparte; she was the first link that united the French nobility to the Consular Government. We shall learn more of this in the course of these Memoirs.

Eugène de Beauharnais, born in 1780, passed through all the phases of a sometimes stormy and sometimes brilliant life, without once forfeiting his title to general esteem. Prince Eugène, now living in a camp, again in the leisure and luxury of his mother's house, was, to speak correctly, educated

* See Appendix.

nowhere. His natural instincts were good; the schooling of Bonaparte formed but did not pervert him; events were his instructors. Madame Bonaparte was incapable of giving sound advice; and therefore her son, who loved her sincerely, perceived very early in his career that it was useless to consult her.

Prince Eugène did not lack personal attractions. His figure was graceful; he was skilled in all bodily exercises; and he inherited from his father that fine manner of the old French gentleman, in which, perhaps, M. de Beauharnais himself gave him his earliest lessons. To these advantages he added simplicity and kind-heartedness; he was neither vain nor presumptuous; he was sincere without being indiscreet, and could be silent when silence was necessary. Prince Eugène had not much natural talent; his imagination was not vivid, and his feelings were not keen. He was always obedient to his stepfather; and although he appreciated him exactly, and was not mistaken with regard to him, he never hesitated to observe the strictest fidelity to him, even against his own interests. Never once was he surprised into showing any sign of discontent, either when the Emperor, while loading his own family with honours, seemed to forget his stepson's claims, or when his mother was repudiated. At the time of the divorce Eugène maintained a very dignified attitude.

Eugène, as colonel of a regiment, was beloved by his soldiers. In Italy he was held in high honour. The sovereigns of Europe esteemed him, and the world was well pleased that his fortunes have survived those of his family.

He had the good fortune to marry a charming princess, who never ceased to love him, and whom he rendered happy. He possessed in perfection those qualities which make the happiness of home life—sweet temper, and that natural cheerfulness which rises above every ill, and was perhaps due to the fact that he was never profoundly moved by anything. When, however, indifference towards the interests of other people is also displayed in one's own personal troubles, it may fairly be called philosophy.

Hortense, Prince Eugène's younger sister (she was born in 1783), was, I think, the most unhappy person of our time, as she least deserved to be so. Cruelly slandered by the Bonapartes, who hated her, included in the accusations which the public delighted to bring against all who belonged to that family, she was not strong enough to contend against such a combination of ills, and to defy those calumnies which blighted her life.*

* There are few things in these Memoirs which will be read with greater surprise than the pages relating to Queen Hortense. My grandmother lived and died in the conviction

Madame Louis Bonaparte was, like her mother and brother, not remarkable for intellect; but, like them, she possessed tact and good feeling, and she was more high-minded and imaginative than they. Left to herself in her youth, she escaped the contagion of the dangerous example of evil. At Madame Campan's select and elegant boarding-school she acquired accomplishments rather than education. While she was young, a brilliant complexion, beautiful hair, and a fine figure rendered her agreeable to look upon; but she lost her teeth early, and

that in speaking thus she was strictly adhering to the truth. The contrary opinion has, however, prevailed; and it has been confirmed by the conduct of her son, Napoleon III., who rendered marked honours to the Duc de Morny. Very likely that, as often happens, everything was true in its turn—in youth, innocence and sorrow; afterwards, consolation. It is unnecessary to say that on this point I preserve the exact text of the Memoirs, as they were written by the hand of their author. I have only thought it right to suppress comments of an opposite nature on certain ladies of the Court. The reader will, perhaps, be surprised to find no mention in these family portraits of either Queen Caroline or Princess Pauline Bonaparte. I leave out certain matters in relation to them which have no bearing on the Emperor himself. My father particularly desired that the text of his mother's Memoirs should be scrupulously respected. It seemed to me, however, that on this point I might fairly depart from the rules of strict editing. Habits, tastes, and customs become modified by time, and much that seemed natural to a clever woman in high life at that period would give scandal in our more punctilious day.

illness and sorrow altered her features. Her natural instincts were good; but, being absolutely ignorant of the world and of the usages of society, and entirely given up to ideal notions drawn from a sphere which she had created for herself, she was unable to rule her life by those social laws, which do not indeed preserve the virtue of women, but which, when they are accused, procure them support indispensable on their passage through the world, and which the approbation of conscience cannot replace. To appear virtuous, it is not sufficient to lead a good life; women must also obey the rules that society has made. Madame Louis, who was placed in circumstances of extreme difficulty, never had a guide; she understood her mother and could not venture to place any confidence in her. As she held firmly to the principles, or rather to the sentiments her imagination had created, she was at first very much surprised at the lapses from morality in which she detected the women by whom she was surrounded, and was still more surprised when she found that those faults were not always the result of love. Her marriage cast her on the mercy of the most tyrannical of husbands; she became the resigned and dejected victim of ceaseless and unremitting persecution, and sank under the weight of her sorrow. She yielded to it without daring to complain, and it was not

until she was at the point of death that the truth became known. I knew Madame Louis Bonaparte very intimately, and was acquainted with all the secrets of her domestic life. I have always believed her to be the purest, as she was the most unfortunate, of women.

Her only consolation was in her tender love for her brother; she rejoiced in his happiness, his success, his amiable temper. How many times have I heard her say: "I only live in Eugène's life!"

She declined to marry Rewbell's son, and this reasonable refusal was the result of one of the errors of her imagination. From her earliest youth she had persuaded herself that a woman, if she would be virtuous and happy, should marry no man unless she loves him passionately. Afterwards, when her mother wished her to marry the Comte de Mun, now a peer of France, she again refused to obey her.

M. de Mun had emigrated; Madame Bonaparte obtained permission for his return. He came back to a considerable fortune, and asked for the hand of Mademoiselle de Beauharnais in marriage. Bonaparte, then First Consul, had little liking for this union; Madame Bonaparte would, however, have had her own way about it, only for the obstinate resistance of her daughter. Some one said before her that M. de Mun had been, while in Germany,

in love with Madame de Staël. That celebrated woman was, in the imagination of the young girl, a sort of monster, whom it was impossible to know without scandal and without taint. M. de Mun became odious to her, and thus he missed a great match, but also the terrible downfall that was to ensue. It was a strange accident of destiny, thus to have missed being a prince, perhaps a king, and also to have escaped dethronement.

Shortly after, Duroc, then one of the First Consul's aides-de-camp, and in high favour with him, fell in love with Hortense. She was not insensible to his passion, and thought she had at length found that other half of her being which she sought. Bonaparte was in favour of the marriage; but this time Madame Bonaparte was inflexible. "My daughter," she said, "must marry a gentleman, or a Bonaparte." Then Louis was proposed. He had no liking for Hortense, he detested the Beauharnais family, and despised his sister-in-law; but, as he was taciturn, he was supposed to be amiable; as he was severe in his judgments, he was supposed to be a good man. Madame Louis has since told me that when she first heard of this arrangement she suffered terribly. Not only was she forbidden to think of the man she loved, but she was to be given to another, whom she instinctively distrusted. However, as this marriage was in accordance with her mother's wishes, as it

would strengthen the family ties, and might advance her brother's interests, she yielded herself a submissive victim; nay, she did even more. Her imagination was full of the duties imposed on her; she determined to make every sort of sacrifice to the wishes of a husband whom she had the misfortune not to love. Too sincere and too reserved to feign sentiments she did not feel, she was gentle, submissive, full of deference, and more anxious, perhaps, to please him than if she had loved him. The false and suspicious disposition of Louis Bonaparte led him to regard the gentle deference of his wife as affectation and coquetry. "She practises on me," he said, "to deceive me." He believed that her conduct was dictated by the counsels of her experienced mother; he repelled the efforts she made to please him, and treated her with coarse contempt. Nor was this all. He actually repeated to Madame Louis all the accusations which had been brought against her mother, and, after having gone as far in that direction as he could go, he signified his pleasure that confidential relations between his wife and her mother should cease. He added, "You are now a Bonaparte. Our interests should be yours; those of your own family no longer concern you." He accompanied this cruel notification with insulting threats, and a coarse expression of his disdainful opinion of women; he enumerated the precautions he meant to take in

order, as he said, to escape the common fate of all husbands, and declared that he would not be the dupe either of her attempts to escape his vigilance, or of the tricks of pretended docility by which she might hope to win him over.

The effect of such a declaration upon a young and imaginative mind may easily be conceived. Hortense, however, conducted herself as an obedient wife, and for many years only her dejection and her failing health betrayed her sufferings. Her husband, who was harsh and capricious, and, like all the Bonapartes, selfish, worn and embittered besides by a painful disease which he had contracted during the Egyptian campaign, set no limit to his exactions. As he was afraid of his brother, while at the same time he wanted to keep his wife away from Saint Cloud, he ordered her to say it was by her own wish that she seldom went thither, and forbade her to remain there a single night, no matter how much her mother might press her to do so. Madame Louis became pregnant very soon after her marriage. The Bonapartes and Madame Murat, who were displeased at this marriage, because, as Joseph's children were girls, they foresaw that a son of Louis, who would also be a grandson of Madame Bonaparte, would be an object of natural interest to him, spread the infamous report that an improper intimacy had existed between the First Consul and his step-

daughter, with the connivance of Josephine herself. The public was quite ready to believe this scandalous falsehood, and Madame Murat repeated it to Louis, who, whether he believed it or not, made it a pretext for every kind of conjugal tyranny. The narrative of his cruelty to his wife would lead me too far at present; I shall return to the subject hereafter. Her servants were employed as spies upon her; the most trifling notes addressed to or written by her were opened; every friendship was prohibited; Louis was jealous even of Eugène. Scenes of violence were frequent; nothing was spared her. Bonaparte was not slow to perceive this state of affairs, but he was grateful to Madame Louis for her silence, which put him at his ease, and exempted him from the necessity of interference. He, who never esteemed women, always professed positive veneration for Hortense, and the manner in which he spoke of and acted towards her is a formal contradiction of the accusations which were brought against her. In her presence his language was always careful and decent. He often appealed to her to arbitrate between his wife and himself, and he took rebukes from her which he would not have endured patiently from any one else. "Hortense," he said more than once, "forces me to believe in virtue."

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

1802-1803.

Family affairs—My first evening at Saint Cloud—General Moreau—M. de Rémusat is made Prefect, and I, Lady of the Palace—Habits of the First Consul and of Madame Bonaparte—M. de Talleyrand—The family of the First Consul—Mesdemoiselles Georges and Duchesnois—Madame Bonaparte's jealousy.

NOTWITHSTANDING the date at which I commence this narrative, I shall not seek to excuse the motives which led my husband to attach himself to the person of Bonaparte, but shall merely explain them. In political matters justifications are worth nothing. Certain persons, having returned to France only three years ago, or having taken no part in public affairs before that epoch, have pronounced an anathema against those among our fellow-citizens who, for twenty years, have not held completely aloof from passing events. If it be represented to them that nobody pretends to decide whether they were right or wrong to indulge in their long sleep, and that they are merely asked to remain equally neutral on a similar

question, they reject such a proposition with all the strength of their present position of vantage; they deal out unsparing and most ungenerous blame, for there is now no risk in undertaking the duties on which they pride themselves. And yet, when a revolution is in progress, who can flatter himself that he has always adopted the right course? Who amongst us has not been influenced by circumstances? Who, indeed, can venture to throw the first stone, without fear lest it recoil upon himself. Citizens of the same country, all more or less hurt by the blows they have given and received, ought to spare each other—they are more closely bound together than they think; and when a Frenchman mercilessly runs down another Frenchman, let him take care: he is putting weapons into the hands of the foreigner, to be used against them both.

Not the least evil of troubled times is that bitter spirit of criticism which produces suspicion, and perhaps contempt, of what is called public opinion. The tumult of passion enables every one to defy it. Men live for the most part so much outside of themselves, that they have few opportunities of consulting their conscience. In peaceful times, and in the case of ordinary actions, the judgments of the world replace it well enough; but how is it possible to submit to them, when they are ready to deal death to those who would bow to them? It is safest, then,

to rely on that conscience which one can never brave with impunity. Neither my husband's conscience nor my own reproaches him or me. The entire loss of his fortune, the experience of facts, the march of events, a moderate and legitimate desire for easier circumstances, led M. de Rémusat in 1802 to seek a place of some kind. To profit by the repose that Bonaparte had given to France, and to rely on the hopes he inspired, was, no doubt, to deceive ourselves, but we did so in common with almost all France. Unerring prevision is given to very few; and if, after his second marriage, Bonaparte had maintained peace, and had employed that portion of his army which he did not disband, to line our frontiers, who is there who would have dared to doubt the duration of his power and the strength of his rights? At that time both his power and his rights seemed to have acquired the force of legitimacy. Bonaparte reigned over France with the consent of France. That fact only blind hatred or foolish pride can now attempt to deny. He reigned for our misfortune, and for our glory; the alliance of those two words is, in the present state of society, more natural than it seems, at least when military glory is in question. When he became Consul, people breathed freely. At first he won public confidence; when, afterwards, causes of disquiet arose, the country was already

committed to him. At last he frightened all those who had believed in him, and led honest citizens to desire his fall, even at the risk of loss to themselves. This is the history of M. de Rémusat and myself; there is nothing humiliating in it. We too were relieved and confident when the country had breathing space, and afterwards we desired its deliverance above all other things.

No one will ever know what I suffered during the later years of Bonaparte's tyranny. It would be impossible for me to describe the absolute sincerity with which I longed for the return of the king, who would, as I firmly believed, restore peace and liberty to us. I foresaw all my personal losses; and M. de Rémusat foresaw them even more clearly than I did. That which we desired would wreck the fortunes of our children. But the loss of our own fortune, which we could have preserved only by the sacrifice of our convictions, cost us no regret. The ills of France cried too loud then—shame to those who would not listen to them! We served Bonaparte, we even loved and admired him; and I do not hesitate to make this avowal. It seems to me it is never painful to acknowledge a genuine feeling. I am not at all embarrassed because the opinions I held at one time are opposed to those which I held at another; I am not incapable of being mistaken. I know what I have felt, and I have always felt it sincerely; that

is sufficient for God, for my son, for my friends, for myself.

My present task is, however, a difficult one, for I must go back in search of a number of impressions which were strong and vivid when I received them, but which now, like ruined buildings devastated by fire, have no longer any connection one with another.

At the commencement of these Memoirs I shall pass as briefly as possible over all that is merely personal to ourselves, up to the time of our introduction to the Court of Bonaparte; afterwards I shall perhaps revert to still earlier recollections. A woman cannot be expected to relate the political life of Bonaparte. If he was so reserved with those who surrounded him, that persons in the next room to him were often ignorant of events which they would indeed learn by going into Paris, but could only comprehend fully by transporting themselves out of France, how much more impossible would it have been for me, young as I was when I made my entry into Saint Cloud, and during the first years that I lived there, to do more than observe isolated facts at long intervals of time? I shall record what I saw, or thought I saw, and will do my best to make my narrative as accurate as it is sincere.

I was twenty-two years old when I became Lady-in-Waiting to Madame Bonaparte. I was

married at sixteen years of age, and had previously been perfectly happy in a quiet life, full of home affections. The convulsions of the Revolution, the execution of my father in 1794, the loss of our fortune, and my mother's love of retirement, kept me out of the gay world of which I knew and desired to know nothing. I was suddenly taken from this peaceful solitude to act a part upon the stage of history, and without having passed through the intermediate phases of society. I was much affected by so abrupt a transition, and my disposition has never lost the impression it then received. I dearly loved my husband and my mother, and in their society I had been accustomed to follow the dictates of my feelings. In the Bonaparte household I interested myself only in what moved me strongly. Never in my life could I occupy myself with the trifles of what is called the great world.

My mother had brought me up most carefully; my education was finished under the superintendence of my husband, a highly cultivated man, older than I by sixteen years. I was naturally grave, a tendency which in women is always allied to enthusiasm. Thus, during the early part of my residence with Madame Bonaparte and her husband, I was full of the sentiments which I considered due to them. Their well-known characters, and what

I have already related of their domestic life, rendered this a sure preparation for many mistakes, and certainly I did not fail to make them.

I have already mentioned our friendship with Madame Bonaparte during the expedition to Egypt. After that, we lost sight of her, until the time when my mother, having arranged a marriage for my sister with a relative of ours,* who had returned secretly, but was still included in the list of the proscribed, addressed herself to Madame Bonaparte in order to obtain his "erasure."† The matter was readily arranged. Madame Bonaparte, who was then endeavouring, with much tact and kindness, to win over persons of a certain class who still held aloof from her husband, begged that my mother and M. de Rémusat would visit her, in order to return thanks to the First Consul. It was not possible to refuse, and, accordingly, we went to the Tuileries‡ one evening, shortly after Bonaparte had taken up his

* M. Charles de Ganay, son of a sister of M. Charles Gravier de Vergennes, and first cousin of the author of these Memoirs. He was a deputy, and colonel of the Royal Guard under the Restoration. I do not know what prevented his marriage with Mademoiselle Alix de Vergennes, who shortly after married General Nansouty. The friendship between the two branches of the family was not disturbed by this affair, and is happily hereditary.—P. R.

† See Appendix.

‡ On the nineteenth of February, 1800 (30 Pluviose, year 8), the First Consul took possession of the Tuileries.—P. R.

abode there. His wife told me afterwards that on the first night of their sojourn in the palace, he said to her, laughing, "Come, little Creole, get into the bed of your masters."

We found Bonaparte in the great drawing-room on the ground floor; he was seated on a sofa. Beside him I saw General Moreau, with whom he appeared to be in close conversation. At that period they were still trying to get on together. A very amiable speech of Bonaparte's, of a graceful kind, unusual with him, was much talked of. He had had a superb pair of pistols made, with the names of all Moreau's battles engraved on the stocks in gold letters. "You must excuse their not being more richly ornamented," said Bonaparte, presenting them to the General; "the names of your victories took up all the space."

There were in the drawing-room ministers, generals, and ladies; the latter almost all young and pretty: Madame Louis Bonaparte; * Madame Murat, who was recently married, and whom I greatly admired; Madame Maret, who was paying her wedding visit, and was at that time very beautiful. Madame Bonaparte received her company with perfect grace; she was dressed tastefully in a revived antique style which was the fashion of the

* Hortense de Beauharnais had married Louis Bonaparte on the 4th January, 1802.

day. Artists had just then a good deal of influence on the customs of society.

Bonaparte rose when we curtsied to him, but after a few vague words reseated himself, and took no more notice of the ladies who were in the room. I confess that, on this occasion, I was less occupied with him than with the luxury, the elegance, and the magnificence on which my eyes rested for the first time.

From that day forth we made occasional visits to the Tuileries; and after a while it was suggested to us, and we took to the idea, that M. de Rémusat might obtain some post, which would restore us to the comfort of which the loss of our fortune had deprived us. M. de Rémusat, having been a magistrate before the Revolution, would have preferred occupation of a legal character. He would not grieve me by separating me from my mother and taking me away from Paris, and therefore he was disposed to ask for a place in the Council of State, and to avoid prefectures. But we really knew nothing of the structure and composition of the Government. My mother had mentioned our position to Madame Bonaparte, who had taken a liking to me, and was also pleased with my husband's manners, and it occurred to her that she might place us near herself. Just at this time my sister, who had not married the cousin whom I have mentioned, married M.

de Nansouty, the nephew of Madame de Montesson, a general of brigade, and a man very much esteemed in the army and in society. This marriage strengthened our connection with the Consular Government, and Madame Bonaparte told my mother, a month afterwards, that she hoped before long M. de Rémusat would be made a Prefect of the Palace. I will pass over in silence the sentiments with which this news was received in the family. For my own part, I was exceedingly frightened. M. de Rémusat was resigned rather than pleased, and as he is a particularly conscientious man, he applied himself to all the minute details of his new occupation, immediately after his nomination, which soon followed. Shortly afterwards I received the following letter from General Duroc, Governor of the Palace :—

"MADAME,

"The First Consul has nominated you to attend upon Madame Bonaparte, in doing the honours of the palace. His personal knowledge of your character and of your principles satisfies him that you will acquit yourself of this duty with the politeness which distinguishes French ladies, and with dignity such as the Government requires. I am happy to have been made the medium of announcing to you this mark of his esteem and confidence.

"Receive, madame, my respectful homage."

Thus did we find ourselves installed at this singular Court. Although Bonaparte would have been angry if any one had seemed to doubt the sincerity of his utterances, which were at this period entirely republican, he introduced every day some novelty into his manner of life, which tended to give the place of his abode more and more resemblance to the palace of a sovereign. He liked display, provided it did not interfere with his own particular habits; therefore he laid the weight of ceremonial on those who surrounded him. He believed also that the French are attracted by the glitter of external pomp. He was very simple in his own attire, but he required his officers to wear magnificent uniforms. He had already established a marked distance between himself and the two other Consuls: and just as, although he used the preamble, *By order of the Consuls*, etc., in the acts of government, his own signature only was placed at the end, so he held his Court alone, either at the Tuileries or at Saint Cloud; he received the ambassadors with the ceremonial used by kings, always appeared in public attended by a numerous guard, while he allowed his colleagues only two grenadiers to escort their carriages; and finally he began to give his wife rank in the State.

At first we found ourselves in a somewhat difficult position, which, nevertheless, had its advantages.

Military glory and the rights it confers were all-in-all to the generals and aides-de-camp who surrounded Bonaparte. They seemed to think that every distinction belonged exclusively to them. The Consul, however, who liked conquest of every kind, and whose design was to gain over to himself all classes of society, made his Court pleasant to persons belonging to other professions. Besides this, M. de Rémusat, who was a man of intellect, of remarkable learning, and superior to his colleagues in conversational powers, was soon distinguished by his master, who was quick at discovering qualities which might be useful to himself. Bonaparte was glad that persons in his service should know, for his purposes, things of which he was ignorant. He found that my husband knew all about certain customs which he wanted to re-establish, and was a safe authority on matters of etiquette and the habits of good society. He briefly indicated his projects, was at once understood, and as promptly obeyed. This unusual manner of pleasing him at first gave some offence to the military men. They foresaw that they would no longer be the only persons in favour, and that they would be required to alter the rough manners which did well enough for camps and fields of battle; therefore our presence displeased them. For my own part, although I was so young, I had more ease of manner than their wives. Most of

my companions were ignorant of the world, timid and silent, and they were either shy or frightened in the presence of the First Consul. I was very quick and lively, fond of novelty and of intellectual pursuits, interested in observing strange scenes and persons, and I found favour with my new sovereign, because, as I have already said, I took pleasure in listening to him. And then, Madame Bonaparte liked me, because she herself had chosen me; she was pleased that she had been able to attach a person of good family to herself, and that, through the medium of my mother, whom she respected highly. She trusted me, and I was attached to her, so that before long she confided all her secrets to me, and I faithfully preserved them. Although I might have been her daughter,* I was often enabled to give her good advice, because the habits of a secluded and strict life make one take a serious view of things. My husband and I were soon placed in so prominent a position that we had to secure forgiveness for it. We obtained that position almost entirely by preserving our simple ways, by keeping within the bounds of politeness,

* The Empress Josephine was born at Martinique, in 1763. She married M. de Beauharnais in 1779, and separated from him in 1783. After the death of her husband she was married (civilly) to General Bonaparte, on the 9th of March, 1796. She died on the 29th of May, 1814.—P. R.

and by avoiding everything which might lead to the suspicion that we wanted to trade on the favour we enjoyed.

M. de Rémusat lived in a simple and kindly fashion in the midst of this bristling Court. As for me, I was fortunate enough to hold my own without offence, and I put forward no pretensions distasteful to other women. The greater number of my companions were much handsomer than I—some of them were very beautiful; and they were all superbly dressed. My face, which had no beauty but that of youth, and the habitual simplicity of my attire, satisfied them that in several ways they were superior to me; and it soon seemed as if we had made a tacit compact that they should charm the eyes of the First Consul when we were in his presence, and that I should endeavour, so far as lay in my power, to interest his mind. As I have already said, to do that, one had only to be a good listener.

Political ideas rarely enter into the head of a woman at twenty-two. I was at that time quite without any kind of party spirit. I never reasoned on the greater or less right which Bonaparte had to the power of which every one declared that he made a good use. M. de Rémusat, who believed in him, as did nearly the whole of France, was full of the hopes that at that time seemed to be well founded. All classes, outraged and disgusted by the horrors of

the Revolution, and grateful to the Consular Government which preserved us from the Jacobite reaction, looked upon its coming into power as a new era for the country. The experiments in liberty that had been repeatedly made, had inspired a natural, though not reasonable, aversion to it; for, in truth, liberty always disappeared when its name was used merely to differentiate successive kinds of tyranny. Generally speaking, nobody in France wanted anything except quiet, the right to free exercise of the intellect, the cultivation of private virtues, and the reparation, by degrees, of those losses of fortune which were common to all. When I remember the dreams which I cherished at that time, the recollection makes me sick at heart. I regret those fancies, as one regrets the bright thoughts of the spring-time life—of that time when, to use a simile of Bonaparte's, one looks at all things through a gilded veil which makes them bright and sparkling. "Little by little," said he, "this veil thickens as we advance in life, until all is nearly black." Alas! he himself soon stained with blood that gilded veil through which France had gladly contemplated him.

It was in the autumn of 1802 that I established myself for the first time at Saint Cloud, where the First Consul then was. There were four ladies, and each in succession passed a week in attendance on Madame Bonaparte. The service, as it was called,

of the Prefects of the Palace, of the Generals of the Guard, and of the Aides-de-Camp, was conducted in the same way. Duroc, the Governor of the Palace, lived at Saint Cloud; he kept the household in perfect order; we dined with him. The First Consul took his meals with his wife. Twice a week he invited some members of the Government; once a month he gave a great dinner to a hundred guests, in the Gallery of Diana at the Tuileries; after these dinners he received every one who held an important post or rank, either military or civil, and also foreigners of note. During the winter of 1803 we were still at peace with England. A great number of English people came to Paris, and as we were not accustomed to seeing them, they excited much curiosity.

At these brilliant receptions there was a great display of luxury. Bonaparte liked women to dress well, and, either from policy or from taste, he encouraged his wife and sisters to do so. Madame Bonaparte and Mesdames Bacciochi and Murat (Madame Leclerc, afterwards Princess Pauline, was at Saint Domingo in 1802) were always magnificently attired. Costumes were given to the different corps; the uniforms were rich; and this pomp, coming as it did after a period in which the affectation of squalor had been combined with that of extravagant *civisme*, seemed to be an additional guarantee against the return

of that fatal *régime*, which was still remembered with dread.

Bonaparte's costume at this period is worthy of record. On ordinary days he wore the uniform of his guard; but he had decreed, for himself and his two colleagues, that on all occasions of grand ceremonial each should wear a red coat, made of velvet in winter, in summer of some other material, and embroidered in gold. The two Consuls, Cambacérès and Lebrun, elderly, powdered, and well set up, wore this gorgeous coat, with lace ruffles, and a sword, after the old fashion of full dress; but Bonaparte, who detested all such adornments, got rid of them as much as possible. His hair was cut short, smoothed down, and generally ill arranged. With his crimson-and-gold coat he would wear a black cravat, a lace frill to his shirt, but no sleeve ruffles. Sometimes he wore a white vest embroidered in silver, but more frequently his uniform waistcoat, his uniform sword, breeches, silk stockings, and boots. This extraordinary costume and his small stature gave him the oddest possible appearance, which, however, no one ventured to ridicule. When he became Emperor, he wore a richly-laced coat, with a short cloak and a plumed hat; and that costume became him very well. He also wore a magnificent collar of the Order of the Legion of Honour, in diamonds, on

State occasions; but on ordinary occasions he wore only the silver cross.

On the eve of his coronation, the marshals he had created a few months before came to pay him a visit, all gorgeously arrayed. The splendour of their costume, in contrast with his plain uniform, made him smile. I was standing at a little distance from him, and as he saw that I smiled also, he said to me, in a low tone, "It is not every one who has the right to be plainly dressed." Presently the marshals began disputing among themselves about the great question of precedence. Their pretensions were very well founded, and each enumerated his victories. Bonaparte, while listening to them, again glanced at me. "I think," said I, "you must have stamped your foot on France, and said, 'Let all the vanities arise from the soil.'" "That is true," he replied; "but it is fortunate that the French are to be ruled through their vanity."

During the first months of my sojourn at Saint Cloud in the winter, and at Paris, my life was very pleasant. In the morning, at eight o'clock, Bonaparte left his wife's room and went to his study. When we were in Paris, he again went down to her apartments to breakfast; at Saint Cloud, he breakfasted alone, generally on the terrace. While at breakfast, he received artists and actors; and talked to them freely and pleasantly. Afterwards, he

devoted himself to public affairs until six o'clock. Madame Bonaparte remained at home during the morning, receiving an immense number of visitors, chiefly women. Among these would be some whose husbands belonged to the Government, and some (these were called *de l'ancien régime*) who did not wish to have, or to appear to have, relations with the First Consul, but who solicited, through his wife, "erasures" or restitutions. Madame Bonaparte received them all with perfect grace. She promised everything, and sent every one away well pleased. Their petitions were put aside and lost sometimes, but then they brought fresh ones, and she never seemed tired of listening.*

* My father, born in 1797, was very young at this time. He had, however, a distinct recollection of a visit which he paid to the palace with his mother, and he writes in a note respecting it:—

"On Sunday I was taken to the Tuileries, and allowed to look on at the review of the troops in the Carrousel from the ladies'-maids' window. A large drawing by Isabey, which has been engraved, exactly reproduces all that was interesting in that spectacle. One day, after the parade, my mother came for me (I think she had accompanied Madame Bonaparte into the court of the Tuileries), and took me up a staircase full of soldiers, at whom I stared hard. One of them, who was coming down, spoke to her; he wore an infantry uniform. 'Who is that?' I asked, when he had passed. He was Louis Bonaparte. Then I saw a young man going upstairs, in the well-known uniform of the Guides. His name I did not need to ask. Children in those days knew the insignia of every rank and

We dined at six in Paris; at Saint Cloud we went out to drive at that hour—the Consul in a *calèche* with his wife, we in other carriages. Bonaparte's brother and sisters, and Eugène de Beauharnais, might come to dine with him whenever they wished to do so. Sometimes Madame Louis came; but she never slept at Saint Cloud. The jealousy of Louis Bonaparte, and his extreme suspicion, had already made her shy, and melancholy. Once or twice a week, the little Napoleon (who afterwards died

corps in the army, and who did not know that Eugène de Beauharnais was Colonel of the Guides? At length we reached Madame Bonaparte's drawing-room. At first there was no one there but herself, one or two ladies, and my father, wearing his red coat embroidered in silver. I was probably kissed—perhaps they thought me grown; then no one noticed me any further. Soon an officer of the Consul's guard entered. He was short, thin, and carried himself badly, or at least carelessly. I was sufficiently drilled in etiquette to observe that he moved about a great deal, and made rather free. Among other things, I was surprised to see him sit on the arm of a chair. From thence he spoke, across a considerable distance, to my mother. We were in front of him, and I remarked his thin, almost wan face, with its brown and yellowish tints. We drew near him while he spoke. When I was within his reach, he noticed me; he took me by my two ears and pulled them rather roughly. He hurt me, and, had I not been in a palace, I should have cried. Then, turning to my father, he asked, 'Is he learning mathematics?' Soon after I was taken away. 'Who is that soldier?' I enquired of my mother. 'That soldier is the First Consul.'"

Such was my father's introduction to the life of Courts. He saw the Emperor only once more, and under similar circumstances.—P. R.

in Holland) was sent to Saint Cloud. Bonaparte seemed to love that child: he built hopes for the future upon him. Perhaps it was only on account of those hopes that he noticed him; for M. de Talleyrand has told me that, when the news of his nephew's death reached Berlin, Bonaparte, who was about to appear in public, was so little affected, that M. de Talleyrand said, "You forget that a death has occurred in your family, and that you ought to look serious." "I do not amuse myself," replied Bonaparte, "by thinking of dead people."

It would be curious to compare this frank utterance with the fine speech of M. de Fontanes, who, having to deliver an address on the depositing of the Prussian flags at the Invalides with great pomp, dwelt pathetically upon the majestic grief of a conqueror who turned from the splendour of his victories to shed tears over the death of a child.*

* The following letters were written by the Emperor on the occasion of the death of this child, in May, 1807. He was at Finkestein, and he wrote to the Empress Josephine:—

"I know how much the death of poor Napoleon grieves you; you can comprehend the pain I feel. I wish I were near you, that you might be moderate and reasonable in your grief. You have had the happiness never to lose a child; but that loss is one of the conditions and penalties attached to our miserable human destiny. Let me hear that you have been reasonable, and that you are well, if you would not increase my trouble. Adieu, my love."

Some days later (the 20th of May), he wrote to the Queen of

After the Consul had dined, we were told we might go upstairs again. The conversation was prolonged, according as he was in a good or a bad humour. He would go away after a while, and in general we did not see him again. He returned to work, gave some particular audience or received one of the ministers, and retired early. Madame Bonaparte played cards in the evening. Between ten and eleven o'clock she would be told, "Madame, the First Consul has gone to his room," and then she would dismiss us for the night.

She and all those about her were very reserved respecting public affairs. Duroc, Maret (then Secretary of State), and the private secretaries, were impenetrable. Most of the soldiers, to avoid talking, as I believe, abstained from thinking; in that kind of life there was not much wear and tear of the mind.

On my arrival at Court, I was quite ignorant of the more or less dread that Bonaparte inspired in

Holland: "My daughter, all that I hear from the Hague proves to me that you are not reasonable. However legitimate may be your grief, it ought to have limits. Do not ruin your health. Take some recreation, and learn that life is strewn with so many trials, and may be the cause of so many evils, that death is not the worst one of all." He wrote the same day to M. Fouché: "I have felt the loss of little Napoleon very much. I could have wished that his father and mother had received from nature as much courage to endure all the evils of life as I have. But they are young, and they have reflected less on the fragility of all things here below."—P. R.

those who had known him for some time; I was less embarrassed in his presence than the others, and I did not think myself bound to adopt the system of monosyllables, religiously and, perhaps, prudently, observed by all the household. This, however, exposed me to ridicule in a way of which I was unconscious at first, which afterwards amused me, but which in the end I had to avoid.

One evening Bonaparte was praising the ability of the elder M. Portalis, who was then working at the Civil Code, and M. de Rémusat remarked M. Portalis had profited by the study of Montesquieu in particular, adding that he had learned Montesquieu as one learns the catechism. Bonaparte, turning to one of my companions, said to her, laughing, "I would bet something that you do not know what this Montesquieu is." "Pardon me," she replied, "everybody has read 'Le Temple de Guide.'" At this Bonaparte went off into a fit of laughter, and I could not help smiling. He looked at me and said, "And you, madame?" I replied simply that I was not acquainted with "Le Temple de Guide," but had read "Considérations sur les Romains," and that I thought neither the one nor the other work was the catechism to which M. de Résumat alluded. "*Diable!*" said Bonaparte, "you are a *savante!*" This epithet disconcerted me, for I felt that it would stick. A minute after,

Madame Bonaparte began to talk of a tragedy (I do not know what it was) which was then being performed. On this the First Consul passed the living authors in review, and spoke of Ducis, whose style he did not admire. He deplored the mediocrity of our tragic poets, and said that, above everything in the world, he should like to recompense the author of a fine tragedy. I ventured to say that Ducis had spoilt the "Othello" of Shakespeare. This long English name coming from my lips produced a sensation among our silent and attentive audience in epaulettes. Bonaparte did not altogether like anything English being praised. We argued the point a while. All I said was very commonplace; but I had named Shakespeare, I had held my own against the Consul, I had praised an English author. What audacity! what a prodigy of erudition! I was obliged to keep silence for several days after, or at least only to take part in idle talk, in order to efface the effect of my unlucky and easily-gained reputation for learning.

When I left the palace and went back to my mother's house, I associated there with many amiable women and distinguished men, whose conversation was most interesting; and I smiled at the difference between their society and that of the Court of the First Consul.

One good effect of our almost habitual silence

was that it kept us from gossip. The women had no chance of indulging in coquetry; the men were incessantly occupied in their duties; and Bonaparte, who did not yet venture to give way to all his fancies, and felt that the appearance of regularity would be useful to him, lived in a way which deceived me as to his morality. He appeared to love his wife very much; she seemed to be all in all to him. Nevertheless, I discovered ere long that she had troubles of a nature which surprised me. She was of an exceedingly jealous disposition. It was a very great misfortune for her that she had no children by her second husband; he sometimes expressed his annoyance, and then she trembled for her future. The family of the First Consul, who were always bitter against the Beauharnais, made the most of this misfortune. From these causes quarrels arose. Sometimes I found Madame Bonaparte in tears, and then she would complain bitterly of her brothers-in-law, of Madame Murat, and of Murat, who kept up their own influence by exciting the Consul to passing fancies, and promoting his secret intrigues. I begged her to keep quiet. I could see that if Bonaparte loved his wife, it was because her habitual gentleness gave him repose, and that she would lose her power if she troubled or disturbed him. However, during my first years at Court, the slight differences which arose between them always

ended in satisfactory explanations and in redoubled tenderness.

After 1802, I never saw General Moreau at Bonaparte's Court; they were already estranged. Moreau's mother-in-law and wife were schemers, and Bonaparte could not endure a spirit of intrigue in women. Moreover, on one occasion the mother of Madame Moreau, being at Malmaison, had ventured to jest about the suspected scandalous intimacy between Bonaparte and his sister Caroline, then newly married. The First Consul never forgave these remarks; for which he severely censured both the mother and the daughter. Moreau complained, and was sharply questioned about his own attitude. He lived in retirement, among people who kept him in a state of constant irritation; and Murat, who was the chief of an active secret police, spied out causes of offence which were wholly unimportant, and continually carried malicious reports to the Tuileries. This multiplication of the police was one of the evils of Bonaparte's government, and was the result of his suspicious disposition. The agents acted as spies upon each other, denounced each other, endeavoured to make themselves necessary, and kept alive Bonaparte's habitual suspicion. After the affair of the infernal machine, of which M. de Talleyrand availed himself to procure the dismissal of Fouché, the police had been put into the hands of Régnier,

the Chief Judge. Bonaparte thought that his suppressing the Ministry of Police, which was a revolutionary invention, would look like liberalism and moderation. He soon repented of this step, and replaced the regular Ministry by a multitude of spies, whom he continued to employ even after he had reinstated Fouché. His Prefect of Police, Murat, with Duroc, Savary (who then commanded the *Gend'armerie d'élite*), Maret (who had also a secret police, under the orders of M. de Sémonville), and I don't know how many others, did the work of the suppressed Ministry.

Fouché, who possessed in perfection the art of making himself necessary, soon crept back secretly into the favour of the First Consul, and succeeded in getting himself made Minister a second time. The badly conducted trial of General Moreau aided him in that attempt, as will appear presently.

Cambacérès and Lebrun, Second and Third Consuls, took very little part in the administration of Government. The latter, who was an old man, gave Bonaparte no concern. The former, a distinguished magistrate, who had great weight in all questions within the province of the Council of State, took part only in the discussion of certain laws. Bonaparte profited by his knowledge, and relied with good reason on the ridicule that his petty vanity excited, to diminish his import-

ance. Cambacérès, charmed with the distinctions conferred on him, paraded them with childish pleasure, which was humoured and laughed at. His self-conceit on certain points frequently secured his safety.

M. de Talleyrand had vast influence. Every great political question passed through his hands. Not only did he regulate foreign affairs at that period, and not only had he chiefly determined the new State constitutions to be given to Germany —and thereby laid the foundations of his immense fortune—but he had long conferences with Bonaparte every day, and urged him to measures for the establishment of his power on the basis of reparation and reconstruction. I am certain that measures for the restoration of Monarchy were frequently discussed between them. M. de Talleyrand always remained unalterably convinced that Monarchical Government only was suitable to France; while, for his own part, it would have enabled him to resume all his former habits of life, and replaced him on familiar ground. Both the advantages and the abuses proper to Courts would offer him chances of acquiring power and influence. I did not know M. de Talleyrand, and all I had heard of him had prejudiced me strongly against him. I was, however, struck by the elegance of his manners, which presented so strong a con-

trast to the rude bearing of the military men by whom I was surrounded. He preserved among them the indelible characteristics of a *grand seigneur*. He overawed by his disdainful silence, by his patronizing politeness, from which no one could escape. M. de Talleyrand, who was the most artificial of beings, contrived to make a sort of natural character for himself out of a number of habits deliberately adopted; he adhered to them under all circumstances, as though they had really constituted his true nature. His habitually light manner of treating the most momentous matters was almost always useful to himself, but it frequently injured the effect of his actions.

For several years I had no acquaintance with him—I distrusted him vaguely; but it amused me to hear him talk, and to see him act with the ease peculiar to himself, that lent infinite grace to all those ways of his, which in any other man would be regarded as sheer affectation.

The winter of this year (1803) was very brilliant. Bonaparte desired that fêtes should be given, and he also occupied himself with the restoration of the theatres. He confided the carrying out of the latter design to his Prefects of the Palace. M. de Rémusat was entrusted with the charge of the Comédie Française; a number of pieces which had been prohibited by Republican policy were put upon the stage.

By degrees all the former habits of social life were resumed. This was a clever way of enticing back those who had been familiar with that social life, and of reuniting the ties that bind civilized men together. This system was skilfully carried out. Hostile opinions became weaker daily. The Royalists, who had been baffled on the 18th Fructidor, continued to hope that Bonaparte, after having re-established order, would include the return of the House of Bourbon among his restorations. They deceived themselves on that point indeed, but at least they had to thank him for the re-establishment of order; and they looked forward to a decisive blow, which, by disposing of his person and suddenly rendering vacant a place which henceforth no one but he could fill, would make it evident that only the legitimate sovereign could be his natural successor. This secret idea of a party which is generally confident in what it hopes, and always imprudent in what it attempts, led to renewed correspondence with our princes, to attempts by the *émigrés*, and to movements in La Vendée. All these proceedings Bonaparte watched in silence.

On the other hand, those who were enamoured of federal government observed with uneasiness that the consular authority tended towards a centralization which was by degrees reviving the idea of royalty. These malcontents were almost of the same

mind as the few individuals who, notwithstanding the errors into which the cause of liberty had led some of its partisans, were forced by their consciences to acknowledge that the French Revolution was a movement of public utility, and who feared that Bonaparte might succeed in paralyzing its action. Now and then a few words were said on this subject, which, although very moderate in tone, showed that the Royalists were not the only antagonists of his secret projects whom Bonaparte would meet with. There were the ultra-Jacobins to be kept within bounds, and also the military, who, full of their own pretensions, were astonished that any rights, except theirs, should be recognized. The state of opinion among all these different parties was accurately reported to Bonaparte, who steered his way among them prudently. He went on steadily towards a goal, which at that time few people even guessed at. He kept attention fixed upon a portion of his policy which he enveloped in mystery. He could at will attract or divert attention, and alternately excite the approbation of the one or the other party—disturb or reassure them as he found it necessary; now exciting wonder, and again hope. He regarded the French as fickle children ready to be amused by a new plaything at the expense of their own dearest interests. His position as First Consul was advantageous to him, because, being so indefinite, it excited

less uneasiness among a certain class of people. At a later period, the positive rank of Emperor deprived him of that advantage; then, after having let France into his secret, he had no other means left whereby to efface the impression from the country, but that fatal lure of military glory which he displayed before her. From this cause arose his never-ending wars, his interminable conquests; for he felt we must be occupied at all hazards. And now we can see that from this cause too arose the obligation imposed on him to push his destiny to its limits, and to refuse peace either at Dresden or even at Châtillon. For Bonaparte knew that he must infallibly be lost, from that day on which his compulsory quietude should give us time to reflect upon him and upon ourselves.

At the end of 1802, or the beginning of 1803, there appeared in the *Moniteur* a dialogue between a Frenchman, enthusiastic on the subject of the English constitution, and a so-called reasonable Englishman, who, after having shown that, strictly speaking, England has no constitution, but only institutions, all more or less adapted to the position of the country and to the character of its inhabitants, endeavours to prove that these institutions could not be adopted by the French without giving rise to many evils. By these and similar means, Bonaparte endeavoured to control that desire for liberty which always springs up anew in the French people.

About the close of 1802, we heard at Paris that General Leclerc had died of yellow fever, at Saint Domingo. In the month of January his pretty young widow returned to France. She was then in bad health, and dressed in deep mourning; but still I thought her the most charming person I had ever seen. Bonaparte strongly exhorted her to conduct herself better than she had done before she went out to Saint Domingo; and she promised everything, but soon broke her word.

The death of General Leclerc gave rise to a little difficulty, and the settling of this tended towards that revival of former customs which was preparing the way for monarchy. Bonaparte and Madame Bonaparte put on mourning, and we received orders to do likewise. This was significant enough; but it was not all. The ambassadors were to pay a visit at the Tuileries, to condole with the Consul and his wife on their loss, and it was represented to them that politeness required them to wear mourning on the occasion. They met in consultation, and as there was not time for them to obtain instructions from their several courts, they resolved to act upon the intimation they had received, thus following the custom usual in such cases. Since September, 1802, an ambassador from England, Lord Whitworth, had replaced the *Chargé d'affaires*. There was hope of a lasting peace; intercourse between

England and France increased daily; but, notwithstanding this, persons who were a little better informed than the crowd foresaw causes of dissension between the two Governments. There had been a discussion in the English Parliament about the part which the French Government had taken in the matter of the new Swiss constitution, and the *Moniteur*, which was entirely official, published articles complaining of certain measures taken in London against Frenchmen. Appearances were, however, extremely favourable; all Paris, and especially the Tuileries, seemed to be given up to fêtes and pleasure. Domestic life at the château was all peace, when suddenly the First Consul's taking a fancy to a young and beautiful actress, of the Théâtre Français, threw Madame Bonaparte into great distress, and gave rise to bitter quarrels.

Two actresses (Mesdemoiselles Duchesnois and Georges) had made their first appearance in tragedy almost at the same time. The one was very plain, but her genius speedily gained popularity; the other was not so talented, but was extremely beautiful.*

* The following is my father's recollection of the talents and the rivalry of these two celebrated actresses:—"The *liaison* of the Emperor with Mademoiselle Georges was much talked about. I myself remember when a controversy raged in society respecting the merits of the two *tragédiennes*. After each representation given by the one or the other, there were very animated disputes. Connoisseurs and the public in general preferred Mademoiselle Duchesnois. She had not much talent, however, and

The Parisian public sided warmly with one or the other, but in general the success of talent was greater than that of beauty. Bonaparte, on the contrary, was charmed by the latter; and Madame Bonaparte soon learned, through the spying of her servants, that Mademoiselle Georges had on several occasions been introduced into a little back room in the château. This discovery caused her extreme distress; she told me of it with great emotion, and shed more tears than I thought such a temporary affair called for. I represented to her that gentleness and patience were the only remedies for a grief

acted without intelligence; but she had passion, tenderness, and a touching voice, which moved her audience to tears. It was, I believe, for her that the phrase, 'to have tears in the voice,' was invented. My mother and my aunt (Madame de Nansouty) were in favour of Mademoiselle Duchesnois, even to the point of disputing with my father himself, who, in his official capacity, was bound to be impartial. These discussions on dramatic art, enlivened by the facility which my father's functions gave us for attending the theatres, inspired me with a taste for literature and conversation quite beyond my age. When very young, I was taken to the theatre, and I saw both these Melpomenes. It was said the one was so good as to be beautiful, and the other was so beautiful as to be good. The latter, who was then very young, was indolent, trusting to her charms, and the want of flexibility in her voice and a kind of drawl in her pronunciation interfered with her elocution. I think, however, in reality she was more clever than her rival, but that, by using her talent in so many different ways, she both developed and depreciated it, and she deserved at least a part of the reputation she acquired in her old age."

which time would certainly cure; and it was during the conversations we had on this subject that she gave me a notion of her husband which I would not otherwise have formed. According to her account, he had no moral principles whatever, and only concealed his vicious inclinations at that time because he feared they might harm him; but when he could give himself up to them without any risk, he would abandon himself to the most shameful passions. Had he not seduced his own sisters one after the other? Did he not hold that his position entitled him to gratify all his inclinations? And, besides, his brothers were practising on his weaknesses to induce him to relinquish all relations with his wife. As the result of their schemes she foresaw the much-dreaded divorce, which had already been mooted. "It is a great misfortune for me," she added, "that I have not borne a son to Bonaparte. That gives their hatred a weapon which they can always use against me." "But, madame," I said, "it appears to me that your daughter's child almost repairs that misfortune; the First Consul loves him, and will, perhaps, in the end adopt him." "Alas!" replied she, "that is the object of my dearest wishes; but the jealous and sullen disposition of Louis Bonaparte leads him to oppose it. His family have maliciously repeated to him the insulting rumours concerning my daughter's conduct and the

paternity of her son. Slander has declared the child to be Bonaparte's, and that is sufficient to make Louis refuse his consent to the adoption. You see how he keeps away from us, and now my daughter is obliged to be on her guard in everything. Moreover, independently of the good reasons I have for not enduring Bonaparte's infidelities, they always mean that I shall have a thousand other annoyances to submit to."

This was quite true. I observed that from the moment the First Consul paid attention to another woman—whether it was that his despotic temper led him to expect that his wife should approve this indication of his absolute independence in all things, or whether nature had bestowed upon him so limited a faculty of loving that it was all absorbed by the person preferred at the time, and that he had not a particle of feeling left to bestow upon another—he became harsh, violent, and pitiless to his wife. Whenever he had a mistress, he let her know it, and showed a sort of savage surprise that she did not approve of his indulging in pleasures which, as he would demonstrate, so to speak, mathematically, were both allowable and necessary for him. "I am not an ordinary man," he would say, "and the laws of morals and of custom were never made for me." Such speeches as these aroused the anger of Madame Bonaparte, and she replied to

them by tears and complaints, which her husband resented fiercely. After a while his new fancy would vanish suddenly, and his tenderness for his wife revive. Then he was moved by her grief, and would lavish caresses upon her as unmeasured as his wrath had been; and as she was very placable and gentle, she was easily appeased.

While the storm lasted, however, my position was rendered embarrassing by the confidences of which I was the recipient, and occasionally by certain proceedings in which I was obliged to take part. I remember one occurrence in particular, during the winter of 1803, at which, and the absurd panic into which it threw me, I have often laughed since.

Bonaparte occupied the same room with his wife; she had persuaded him that doing so tended to ensure his personal safety. "I told him," she said, "that as I was a very light sleeper, if any nocturnal attempt on his life was made, I should be there to call for help in a moment." Madame Bonaparte rarely retired until Bonaparte had gone to his room; but Mademoiselle Georges, while she was in the ascendant, used to visit the château at a late hour, and he did not on those occasions retire to rest until an advanced hour of the night. One evening, Madame Bonaparte, who was more than usually jealous and suspicious, kept me with her, while eagerly talking of her troubles. It was

one o'clock in the morning; we were alone in her boudoir, and profound silence reigned in the Tuileries. All at once she rose. "I cannot bear it any longer," she said. "Mademoiselle Georges is certainly with him; I will surprise them." I was alarmed by this sudden resolution, and said all I could to dissuade her from acting on it, but in vain. "Follow me," she said; "let us go up together." Then I represented to her that such an act, very improper even on her part, would be unpardonable on mine, and that in case of her making the discovery which she expected, I should certainly be one too many at the scene which must ensue. She would listen to nothing, she reproached me with abandoning her in her distress, and she begged me so earnestly to accompany her, that, notwithstanding my reluctance, I yielded, saying to myself that our expedition would end in nothing, as no doubt precautions had been taken to prevent a surprise.

Silently we ascended the back staircase leading to Bonaparte's room; Madame Bonaparte, who was much excited, going first, while I followed slowly, feeling very much ashamed of the part I was being made to play.

On our way we heard a slight noise. Madame Bonaparte turned to me and said, "Very likely that is Rustan, Bonaparte's Mameluke, who keeps the door. The wretch is quite capable of killing us

both." On hearing this, I was seized with such terror, that I could not listen to anything more, and, forgetting that I was leaving Madame Bonaparte in the dark, I ran back as quickly as I could to the boudoir, candle in hand. She followed me a few minutes after, astonished at my sudden flight. When she saw my terrified face, she began to laugh, which set me off laughing also, and we relinquished our enterprise. I left her, telling her I thought the fright she had given me was a very good thing for her, and that I was very glad I had yielded to it.

Madame Bonaparte's jealousy affected her sweet temper so much, that it could not long be a secret to anybody. I was in the embarrassing position of a confidante without influence over the person who confided in me, and I could not but appear to be mixed up in the quarrels which I witnessed. Bonaparte thought that one woman must enter eagerly into the feelings of another, and he showed some annoyance at my being made aware of the facts of his private life. Meanwhile it was the ugly actress who grew in favour with the public of Paris; and the handsome one was frequently received with hisses. M. de Rémusat endeavoured to divide the Court patronage fairly between the two, but whatever he did for the one or for the other was received with equal dissatisfaction, either by the First Consul or by the public.

These petty affairs gave us a good deal of annoyance. Bonaparte, without confiding the secret of his interest in the fair actress to M. de Rémusat, complained to my husband, saying that he would not object to my being his wife's confidante, provided I would only give her good advice. My husband represented me as a sensible person, brought up with a great regard for propriety, and who would be most unlikely to encourage Madame Bonaparte's jealous fancies. The First Consul, who was still well disposed towards us, accepted this view of my conduct; but thence arose another annoyance. He called upon me to interfere in his conjugal quarrels, and wanted to avail himself of what he called my good sense against the foolish jealousy of which he was wearied. As I never could conceal my real sentiments, I answered quite sincerely, when he told me how weary he was of all these scenes, that I pitied Madame Bonaparte very much, whether she suffered with or without cause, and that he, above all persons, ought to excuse her; but, at the same time, I admitted that I thought it undignified on her part to endeavour to prove the infidelity which she suspected by employing her servants as spies on her husband. The First Consul did not fail to tell his wife that I blamed her in this respect, and then I was involved in endless explanations between the husband and the wife, into which I

imported all the ardour natural to my age, and also the devotion and attachment which I felt for both of them. We went through a constant succession of scenes, whose details have now faded from my memory, and in which Bonaparte would be at one time imperious, harsh, excessively suspicious, and at another suddenly moved, tender, almost gentle, atoning with a good grace for the faults he acknowledged, but did not renounce. I remember one day, in order to avoid an awkward *tête-à-tête* with Madame Bonaparte, he made me remain to dinner. His wife was just then very angry, because he had declared that henceforth he would have a separate apartment, and he insisted that I should give my opinion on this point. I was quite unprepared to answer him, and I knew that Madame Bonaparte would not readily forgive me if I did not decide in her favour. I tried to evade a reply; but Bonaparte, who enjoyed my embarrassment, insisted. I could find no other way out of the difficulty than by saying that I thought anything which might make people think the First Consul was altering his manner of living would give rise to injurious reports, and that the least change in the arrangements of the château would inevitably be talked about. Bonaparte laughed, and pinching my ear, said, "Ah! you are a woman, and you all back one another."

Nevertheless, he carried out his resolution, and from that time forth occupied a separate apartment. His manner towards his wife, however, became more affectionate after this breeze, and she, on her side, was less suspicious of him. She adopted the advice which I constantly urged upon her, to treat such unworthy rivalry with disdain. "It would be quite time enough to fret," I said, "if the Consul chose one of the women in your own society; that would be a real grief, and for me a serious annoyance." Two years afterwards my prediction was only too fully realized, especially as regarded myself.

CHAPTER II.

1803.

A return to the customs of the Monarchy—M. de Fontanes—Madame d'Houdetôt—Rumours of war—Meeting of the Corps Législatif—Departure of the English ambassador—M. Maret—Marshal Berthier—Journey of the First Consul to Belgium—A carriage accident—The Amiens fêtes.

WITH the exception of this disturbance, the winter passed quietly. The progress of the restoration of order was marked by several new institutions. The Lycées were organized; the magistrates again wore official robes, and were also invested with some importance. A collection of French paintings was placed at the Louvre, and called "The Museum," and M. Denon was appointed superintendent. Pensions and rewards were conferred on men of letters, and M. de Fontanes was frequently consulted. Bonaparte liked to talk with him, and their conversations were in general very entertaining. The First Consul amused himself by attacking the pure and classical taste of M. de Fontanes, who eagerly defended our French authors, and thus he gained a reputation for courage among those

present. For there were already persons at that Court who took so readily to the *rôle* of the courtier, that they looked upon any one who ventured to admire *Mérope* or *Mithridate*, after the master had declared that he cared for neither of those works, as quite an heroic being. Bonaparte appeared to derive great amusement from these literary controversies. At one time he even thought of inviting certain men of letters to come twice a week to Madame Bonaparte's receptions, so that he might enjoy their conversation. M. de Rémusat, who was acquainted with a number of distinguished men in Paris, was directed to invite them to the château. Accordingly, one evening, several academicians and well-known literary men were invited. Bonaparte was in a good humour that night: he talked very well, and allowed others to talk; he was agreeable and animated. I was charmed to see him make himself so agreeable. I was very anxious that he should make a favourable impression on persons who had previously known him, and thus defeat certain prejudices against him which existed. When he chose, he could exhibit keen judgment, as he did for instance, in appraising the worth of the old Abbé Morellet's intellect.* Morellet was a straight-

* The Abbé Morellet, a friend of Madame d'Houdetôt and Madame de Vergennes, was a well-known personage at the end of the eighteenth century, and was called by Voltaire the Abbé Mord-les. He died January 12th, 1819.—P. R.

forward, positive man, who proceeded in argument from fact to fact, and would never admit the power of the imagination on the progress of human ideas. Bonaparte delighted in upsetting this system. Allowing his imagination to take any flight it wished—and in the Abbé's presence it carried him far—he broached all kinds of subjects, gave full flight to his ideas, was highly amused at the bewilderment of the Abbé, and was really very entertaining. The next day he spoke with pleasure of the previous evening, and said he should like to have many such.

A similar reception was therefore fixed for a few days later. Somebody (I forget who) began to talk with much animation about liberty of thought and speech, and the advantages which they secure to nations. This led to a discussion considerably less free than on the former occasion, and the Consul maintained a silence which seemed to paralyze the company. On the third evening, he came in late, was absent and gloomy, and spoke only a few unconnected sentences. Every one was silent and constrained; and the next day the First Consul told us that he saw there was nothing to be made of these men of letters; nothing to be gained by admitting them to intimacy, and he did not wish they should be invited again. He could not bear any restraint, and being obliged to appear affable and in a good humour

on a certain day and at a certain hour, was a yoke which he hastened to shake off.

During that winter two distinguished academicians, MM. de la Harpe and de Saint Lambert, died. I regretted the latter very much, because I was exceedingly attached to Madame d'Houdetôt, whose intimate friend he had been for forty years, and at whose house he died. This delightful old lady received all the best and most agreeable society of Paris. I was a constant visitor at her house; there I found the revival of a day which then seemed lost beyond recall—I mean that in which people conversed in an agreeable and instructive manner. Madame d'Houdetôt, whose age and disposition kept her aloof from all political parties, enjoyed the repose which the country was enjoying, and profited by it to collect at her house all that remained of Parisian good society. They came willingly to cheer and amuse her old age. To go to her house was a relief from the restraint under which I lived at the Tuileries, partly from the example of others and partly from the experience which I was beginning to acquire.

About this time a rumour arose that war with England was likely to break out again. Private letters revealing certain enterprises set on foot in La Vendée were published. In these letters the English Government was accused of aiding the

Vendeans, and George Cadoudal was named in them as the agent between the English Government and the Chouans. M. André was also mentioned; it was said he had got into France secretly, after having already endeavoured, before the 18th Fructidor, to assist the Royalist cause. While this rumour was spreading, the Legislative Assembly was called together. The report of the state of the Republic which was laid before it was remarkable and gave rise to much comment. It included peace with foreign Powers; the *conclusum* given at Ratisbon upon the new partition of Germany, and recognized by all the sovereigns; the Constitution accepted by the Swiss; the Concordat; the regulation of public education; the formation of the Institute;* the improved administration of justice; the amelioration of the finances; the Civil Code, of which a portion was submitted to the Assembly; various public works commenced both on our frontiers and in France; plans for Antwerp, for Mont Cenis, the banks of the Rhine, and the Ourcy Canal; the acquisition of the island of Elba; the possession of Saint Domingo; several proposals for laws upon indirect taxation, on the formation of Chambers of Commerce, on the exercise of the pro-

* It would be more correct to say that the First Consul re-organized the Institute, by suppressing the class of moral and political sciences on January 23rd, 1803. This class was not re-established till after 1830.—P. R.

fession of Medicine, and on manufactures. All this formed a satisfactory statement, and one honourable to the Government. At the end of the report, however, a few words were slipped in, with reference to the possibility of a rupture with England, and the necessity for increasing the army.

Neither the Legislative Assembly nor the Tribunate offered any opposition whatever, and approbation, which at that time was really deserved, was bestowed upon so fair a beginning to many great undertakings.

In March, bitter complaints appeared in our newspapers, of certain pamphlets against Bonaparte which were circulated in England. This sensitiveness to strictures by the English free press was only a pretext; the occupation of Malta and our intervention in the Government of Switzerland were the true causes of the rupture. On the 8th of March, 1803, a message from the King of England to the Parliament declared that important differences between the two Governments had arisen, and complained of the warlike preparations which were being made in the ports of Holland. Immediately afterwards the scene took place in which Bonaparte either feigned or allowed himself to exhibit violent anger in the presence of all the ambassadors. Shortly after, he left Paris for Saint Cloud.

Notwithstanding his absorption in public affairs,

he took care to direct one of his Prefects of the Palace to write a letter of congratulation and compliment to the celebrated musician Paisiello, on the opera of "Proserpine," which had just been given in Paris. The First Consul was exceedingly anxious to attract the celebrated people of all countries to France, and he paid them liberally.

A little later, the rupture between France and England took place, and the English ambassador —before whose house a great crowd had been in the habit of assembling daily, in order to judge of the state of affairs, according to the preparations for departure, which they could or could not perceive in the courtyard—left Paris abruptly. M. de Talleyrand communicated to the Senate a statement of the reasons that rendered war inevitable. The Senate replied that they could only applaud the combined moderation and firmness of the First Consul, and sent a deputation to Saint Cloud to express their gratitude and their devotion. M. de Vaublanc, when speaking at the Legislative Assembly, exclaimed enthusiastically, "What chief of a nation has ever shown a greater love of peace?" If it were possible to separate the history of the negotiations of the First Consul from that of his exploits, it would read like the life of a magistrate whose sole endeavour had been the establishment of peace. The Tribunate expressed a desire that energetic

measures should be taken, and after these various acts of admiration and obedience, the session of the Legislative Assembly came to a close.

Then appeared certain violent notes against the English Government, which afterwards became numerous, and dealt in detail with the attacks of the free daily press in London. Bonaparte dictated the substance of these notes, and M. Maret afterwards drew them up. Thus the sovereign of a great empire entered, so to speak, into a war of words with journalists, and lowered his own dignity by allowing it to be seen that he was stung by the criticisms of ephemeral newspapers, whose comments it would have been far wiser to ignore. It was easy for the English journalists to find out how hard their remarks hit the First Consul, and a little later the Emperor of France, and they accordingly redoubled their attacks. How many times, when we saw him gloomy and out of temper, did Madame Bonaparte tell us it was because he had read some article against himself in the *Courier* or the *Sun?* He tried to wage a pen-and-ink war with the English press; he subsidized certain journals in London, expended a great deal of money, and deceived no one, either in France or in England.

I have said that he often dictated notes on this subject for the *Moniteur*. Bonaparte dictated with great ease. He never wrote anything with his

own hand. His handwriting was bad, and as difficult to be read by others as by himself; his spelling was very defective. He lacked patience to do anything whatever with his own hands; the extreme activity of his mind, and the habitual prompt obedience rendered to him, prevented him from practising an occupation in which the mind must necessarily wait for the action of the body. Those who wrote from his dictation—first M. Bourrienne, then M. Maret, and Menneval, his private secretary —had made a sort of shorthand for themselves, in order that their pens might travel as fast as his thoughts. He dictated while walking to and fro in his cabinet. When he grew angry, he would use violent imprecations, which were suppressed in writing, and which had at least the advantage of giving the writer time to come up with him. He never repeated anything that he had once said, even if it had not been heard, and this was very hard on the poor secretary, for he remembered accurately what he had said and detected every omission. One day he read a tragedy in manuscript, and it interested him sufficiently to inspire him with a fancy to make some alterations in it. "Take a pen and paper," said he to M. de Rémusat, "and write for me." Hardly giving my husband time to seat himself at a table, he began to dictate so quickly that M. de Rémusat, although accustomed

to write with great rapidity, was bathed in perspiration while trying to follow him. Bonaparte perceived his difficulty, and would stop now and then to say, "Come, try to understand me, for I will not repeat what I say." He always derived amusement from causing any one uneasiness and distress. His great general principle, which he applied to everything, both small and great, was that there could be no zeal where there was no disquiet. Fortunately, he forgot to ask for the sheet of observations he had dictated. M. de Rémusat and I have often tried to read it since, but we have never been able to make out a word of it.

M. Maret, the Secretary of State, was a man of very ordinary intellect; indeed, Bonaparte did not dislike mediocrity, because he said he had enough brains to lend those about him what they wanted in that way. M. Maret rose to high favour in consequence of his great facility in writing from the First Consul's dictation. He accustomed himself to follow, and seize so faithfully upon the first indication of Bonaparte's idea, that he could report it just as it came from the speaker's brain, without making an observation. His favour with his master was perhaps still more largely due to the fact that he felt or feigned boundless devotion to him, and it was displayed by such enthusiastic admiration that Bonaparte could not help being flattered.

M. Maret carried the art of skilful adulation so far that, when he travelled with the Emperor, it was positively asserted he took the trouble to leave with his wife drafts of letters, which she copied carefully, complaining that her husband was so exclusively devoted to his master that she could not help feeling jealous. As all the letters were delivered at the Emperor's own quarters while he was travelling, and as he frequently amused himself by opening them, these clever complainings produced exactly the intended effect.

When M. Maret * was Minister of Foreign Affairs, he took care not to follow the example of M. de Talleyrand, who used to say that it was, above all, Bonaparte himself whom it was necessary for that Minister to manage. Maret, on the contrary, fostered all Bonaparte's passions, and was surprised that foreign sovereigns should dare to be angry when he insulted them, or should offer any resistance to their own ruin. He thus advanced his personal fortune at the expense of Europe, whose just interests an honest and able Minister would have endeavoured to protect. A courier was always in readiness, by whom he might despatch to any one of the sovereigns the first angry words that escaped from Bonaparte, when he heard news which displeased him. His weak complaisance was some-

* Afterwards Duc de Bassano.

times injurious to his master. It caused more than one rupture, which was regretted when the first outbreak of violence had passed, and it probably contributed to the fall of Bonaparte; for, in the last year of his reign, while he lingered at Dresden uncertain what to do, Maret delayed for eight days the retreat it was so important to make, because he had not the courage to inform the Emperor of the defection of Bavaria, a piece of intelligence it was most necessary he should learn.* An anecdote of

* The duties of the most conscientious editor do not bind him to explain, to justify, or, still less, to contradict, the assertions or the suppositions of the author whose recollections he lays before the public. It is evident that a great many of the views expressed here are personal, or that they represent public opinion at that period of our history with which they deal. While taking the responsibility of what he prints, the editor does not profess entire agreement with all the opinions of the author, and it is not necessary to bring forward an opinion in opposition to an impression, or a new document or a recent history in contrast with a contemporaneous impression of the facts, on every occasion of divergence. For instance, M. Maret doubtless merits reproach on more than one head, but the accusation that he was so base as not to inform the Emperor in time of the defection in Bavaria, in 1803, is probably one of those imputations which are due to the contempt with which M. de Talleyrand treated his pitiful, insignificant successor. He is known to have said, "I never knew but one man so stupid as the Duc de Bassano; he was M. Maret." It is probable that Maret, on his arrival at Leipsic in October, 1813, was made aware of the treaty of Bavaria with the Coalition, but that he did not attach any great importance to it, or did not dare speak of it to a master

M. de Talleyrand may be related here, as a sample of the skill with which that astute Minister managed

who was becoming day by day less capable of bearing the truth, and of facing things which displeased him. The Duc de Bassano was, of all the Ministers, the least fit to cope with this fatal tendency. There was in his nature a mixture of sincere servility and blind admiration, which made him a courtier rather than a Minister. The following is my father's opinion of Bassano:—"He was neither an utterly unintelligent nor a bad man, but he was one of those persons whose mediocrity, alike in good or in evil, may be as pernicious as stupidity or villainy. He had but little intellect; his self-sufficiency and haughtiness as an improvised nobleman and a *parvenu* statesman were absolutely absurd. His heavy frivolity, his *bourgeois* dignity, and his vulgar affectation obscured what there really was in him. He had a great capacity for work, much facility of expression, a quick and tolerably just perception of the superficial and material side of affairs, an accurate memory for details, a faculty for attending to several things at once, and a talent for identifying himself with the idea or even the sentiment of what was dictated to him. The latter quality made him a useful, or rather a convenient instrument, and as a minister of the second or third rank he would have done well. He had no leaning towards wrong or injustice. Violence directed against individuals was not to his liking, and it is said that he sometimes averted it. He was, moreover, sincerely attached to the Emperor, and, to my knowledge, he never endeavoured to elude by any meanness the misfortunes which in later years that attachment drew down upon himself; but, full of self-confidence, greedy of favour, jealous of his influence, inflated with a sense of his own rank and power, he regarded merit, independence, anything which might tend to throw himself into the shade, or did not serve his ambition, flatter his vanity, or minister to his greatness, with an inimical eye. To keep his place near the Emperor had become his sole thought, and was regarded by him as his chief duty; to please

Bonaparte, and also of the completeness of his own ascendancy.

the Emperor in everything was all his study and all his policy. The Napoleonic system, as the Emperor practised it, was to him official truth, and official truth was to him all truth." In the Memoirs of Count Beugnot, published a few years ago by his grandson, the following passage occurs:—"M. Maret has an excellent heart; he is therefore by nature inclined to everything good. His mind is cultivated, and if diplomacy had not drawn him away from the profession of letters, he would have made a respectable, if not a distinguished, figure in literature. His talent chiefly lies in a singular facility for reproducing the ideas of others, and he has exercised it so largely in editing the *Moniteur*, and in other work of the same nature, that his whole mind is, as it were, absorbed by it. It was the Abbé Siéyès who originally procured the post of Secretary to the Consulate for him. At first he failed to please the First Consul, precisely on account of those qualities which since then have endeared him to Bonaparte—his obsequiousness, his eagerness, his propensity to merge his own mind in that of another; but by degrees, as the First Consul absorbed authority, and became accustomed to rule alone, he grew reconciled to the Secretary of the Consulate. The despotism of the one and the favour of the other grew in the same proportion." ("Mémoires du Comte Beugnot," vol. ii. p. 316.) Baron Ernouf has recently published an apology for the Duc de Bassano, under the title "Maret, Duc de Bassano." These several estimates, which are different without being contradictory, show that the influence of the Duc de Bassano in the Imperial councils was not beneficial to the common weal. He was apparently one of those who think that a disagreeable disclosure or unwelcome advice is more hurtful to the adviser than useful to the recipient. Such people are careful rather to foster the weaknesses than to consider the actual situation of their masters, and to serve their passions at the expense of their interests. These flatterers are, doubtless, detestable, but the source of their crimes is absolute power. It is because the monarch is

A treaty of peace between England and France was being arranged at Amiens, in the spring of 1810. Certain difficulties which had arisen between the plenipotentiaries had given rise to some disquiet, and Bonaparte was anxiously expecting despatches. The courier arrived, and brought the much-desired signature to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. M. de Talleyrand put it in his pocket and went to the First Consul. He appeared before him with that immovable countenance which he wears on every occasion. For a whole hour he remained with Bonaparte, transacting a number of important matters of business, and when all was done, "Now," said he, smiling, "I am going to give you a great pleasure; the treaty is signed, and here it is." Bonaparte was astounded at this fashion of announcing the matter. "Why did you not tell me at once?" he demanded. "Ah," replied M. de Talleyrand, "because then you would not have listened to me on any other subject. When you are pleased, you are not always pleasant." The self-control displayed in this reticence struck the Consul, "and," added M. de Talleyrand, "did not make him angry, because he saw immediately how far it might be made useful to himself."

Another person, who was really more attached to

all-powerful that it is dangerous to displease him. All meanness, as well as all justice, emanates from the king.—P. R.

Bonaparte, and quite as demonstrative in his admiration for him as M. Maret, was Marshal Berthier, Prince of Wagram. He had served in the campaign in Egypt, and had become strongly attached to his General. Berthier's friendship for him was so great that, little as Bonaparte valued anything coming from the heart, he could not but respond to it, in some degree. The sentiment was, however, very unequally divided between them, and was used by the powerful one of the two as a means of exaction. One day, Bonaparte said to M. de Talleyrand, "I really cannot understand how a relation that bears some appearance of friendship has established itself between Berthier and me. I don't indulge in useless sentiments, and Berthier is so uninteresting that I do not know why I should care at all about him, and yet, when I think of it, I believe I really have some liking for him." "If you do care about him," replied M. de Talleyrand, "do you know the reason why? It is because he believes in you."

These anecdotes, which I set down as they recur to my memory, did not come to my knowledge till a much later period, when my greater intimacy with M. de Talleyrand revealed to me the chief traits in Bonaparte's character. At first I was completely deceived by him, and was very happy to be deceived. I knew he had genius, I saw that he was disposed to make amends for the passing wrongs he did his wife,

and I remarked his friendship for Berthier with pleasure; he caressed little Napoleon in my presence, and seemed to love him. I regarded him as accessible to kindly natural feelings, and my youthful imagination arrayed him in all those qualities which I desired to find in him. It is also only just to admit that excess of power intoxicated him; that his passions were increased in violence by the facility with which he was enabled to gratify them; but that while he was young and as yet uncertain of the future, he frequently hesitated between the open exhibition of vice and, at least, the appearance of virtue.

After the declaration of war with England, somebody (I do not know who) suggested to Bonaparte the idea of an invasion by means of flat-bottomed boats. I cannot say with certainty whether he really believed in this plan, or whether he only used it as a pretext for collecting and increasing his army, which he assembled at the camp at Boulogne. So many people maintained that a descent upon the shores of England in this way was practicable, that it is quite possible he may have thought fate had a success of the kind in store for him. Enormous works were begun in our ports, and in some of the Belgian towns; the army was marched to the coast, and Generals Soult and Ney were sent to command it at different points. The idea of a conquest of England

fired the general imagination; and even the English themselves began to feel uneasy, and thought it necessary to make some preparations for defence. Attempts were made to excite the public mind against the English by dramatic representations; scenes from the life of William the Conqueror were represented at the theatres. The conquest of Hanover was easily effected, but then came the blockade of our ports that did us so much harm.

During the summer of this year (1803) a journey to Belgium was arranged, and Bonaparte resolved that it should be made with great magnificence. He had little trouble in persuading Madame Bonaparte to take with her everything that could make an impression on the people to whom she was about to exhibit herself. Madame Talhouet and I were selected to accompany her, and the Consul gave me 30,000 francs for those expenses which he prescribed. He left Paris on the 24th June, with a *cortége* of several carriages, two generals of his guard, his aides-de-camp, Duroc, two Prefects of the Palace (M. de Rémusat and a Piedmontese named Salmatoris), and commenced the journey in great pomp.

Before we set out, we went for one day to Mortefontaine, an estate which had been purchased by Joseph Bonaparte. All the family were assembled there, and a strange scene occurred.

We passed the morning in walking about the

gardens, which are beautiful. When dinner hour approached, a question arose about the placing of the guests. The elder Madame Bonaparte was at Mortefontaine, and Joseph told his brother that he intended to take his mother in to dinner, and to place her on his right hand, while Madame Bonaparte was to sit on his left. The First Consul took offence at this arrangement, which placed his wife in the second rank, and insisted that his brother should transfer their mother to that position. Joseph refused, and no argument could induce him to give way. When dinner was announced, Joseph took his mother's hand, and Lucien escorted Madame Bonaparte. The First Consul, incensed at this opposition to his will, hurriedly crossed the room, took the arm of his wife, passed out before every one, seated her beside himself, and then, turning to me, he ordered me to place myself near him. The company were all greatly embarrassed, I even more so than the others; and Madame Joseph Bonaparte,* to whom some politeness was due, found herself at the bottom of the table, as if she were not one of the family.

The stiffness and gloom of that dinner-party may be easily imagined. The brothers were angry, Madame Bonaparte was wretched, and I was excessively distressed by my prominent position.

* Joseph Bonaparte had married Mademoiselle Julia Clary, the daughter of a merchant at Marseilles.—P. R.

During the dinner Bonaparte did not address a single member of his family; he occupied himself with his wife, talked to me, and chose this opportune occasion to inform me that he had that morning restored to my cousin, the Vicomte de Vergennes, certain forests which had long been sequestrated on account of his emigration, but which had not been sold. I was touched by this mark of his kindness, but it was very vexatious to me that he selected such a moment to tell me of it, because the gratitude which I would otherwise have gladly expressed, and the joy which I really felt, made me appear to the observers of the little scene to be talking freely to him, while I was really in a state of painful constraint. The remainder of the day passed drearily, as may be supposed, and we left Mortefontaine on the morrow.

An incident happened at the beginning of our journey which increased the regard I then entertained for Bonaparte and his wife. He travelled with her and one of the generals of his guard, and his carriage was preceded by one containing Duroc and three aides-de-camp. A third carriage was occupied by Madame Talhouet, M. de Rémusat, and myself; two others followed. Shortly after we had left Compiègne, where we visited a military school on our way to Amiens, our carriage was suddenly upset. Madame Talhouet's head was

badly cut; M. de Rémusat and I were only bruised. With some trouble we were extricated from the carriage. Bonaparte, who was on in front, was told of this accident; he at once alighted from his carriage, and with Madame Bonaparte, who was much frightened about me, hastened to join us at a cottage, whither we had been taken. I was so terrified, that, as soon as I saw Bonaparte, I begged him with tears to send me back to Paris; I already disliked travelling as much as did the pigeon of La Fontaine, and in my distress I cried out that I must return to my mother and my children.

Bonaparte said a few words intended to quiet me, but finding that he could not succeed, he took my arm in his, gave orders that Madame Talhouet should be placed in one of the other vehicles, and after satisfying himself that M. de Rémusat was none the worse for the accident, he led me, frightened as I was, to his own carriage, and made me get in with him. We set off again, and he took pains to cheer up his wife and me, telling us, laughingly, to kiss each other and cry, "because," he said, "that always does women good." After a while his animated conversation distracted my thoughts, and my fear of the further journey subsided. Madame Bonaparte having referred to the grief my mother would feel if any harm happened to me, Bonaparte questioned me about her, and appeared to be well

aware of the high esteem in which she was held in society. Indeed, it was largely to this that his attention to me was due. At that period, when so many people still held back from the advances he made to them, he was greatly gratified that my mother had consented to my holding a place in his household. I was, indeed, in his eyes almost a great personage, whose example would, he hoped, be largely followed.

On the evening of the same day we arrived at Amiens, where we were received with enthusiasm impossible to describe. The horses were taken from the carriage by the inhabitants, who insisted on drawing it themselves. I was the more affected by this spectacle, as it was absolutely novel to me. Since I had been of an age to observe what was passing around me, I had witnessed only scenes of terror and woe, I had heard only sounds of hate and menace; and the joy of the inhabitants of Amiens, the garlands that decorated our route, the triumphal arches erected in honour of him who was represented on all these devices as the saviour of France, the crowds who fought for a sight of him, the universal blessings which could not have been uttered to order —the whole spectacle, in fact, so affected me that I could not restrain my tears. Madame Bonaparte wept; I even saw Bonaparte's own eyes glisten for a moment.

CHAPTER III.

1803.

Continuation of the journey to Belgium—Opinions of the First Consul on gratitude, on glory, and on the French—Ghent, Malines, and Brussels—The clergy—M. de Roquelaure—Return to Saint Cloud—Preparations for an invasion of England—Marriage of Madame Leclerc—Journey of the First Consul to Boulogne—Illness of M. de Rémusat—I rejoin him—Conversations with the First Consul.

On Bonaparte's arrival in a town, the Prefect of the Palace was directed to summon the various persons in authority, that they might be presented to him. The Prefect, the Mayor, the Bishop, the Presidents of the Tribunals, then read an address to him, and, turning to Madame Bonaparte, made her a little speech also. According to the mood he happened to be in, Bonaparte would listen to these discourses to the end, or interrupt them by questioning the deputation on the nature of their respective functions, or on the district in which they exercised them. He rarely put questions with an appearance of interest, but rather with the air of a man who desires to show his knowledge, and wants to see whether he can be answered. These

speeches were addressed to the Republic; but any one who reads them may see that in almost every respect they might have been addressed to a sovereign. Indeed, the Mayors of some of the Flemish towns went so far as to urge the Consul to "complete the happiness of the world by exchanging his precarious title for one better suited to the lofty destiny to which he was called." I was present the first time that happened, and I kept my eyes fixed upon Bonaparte. When these very words were uttered, he had some difficulty in checking the smile that hovered about his lips, but, putting strong control upon himself, he interrupted the orator, and replied, in a tone of feigned anger, that it would be unworthy of him to usurp an authority which must affect the existence of the Republic. Thus, like Cæsar, he repudiated the crown, though perhaps he was not ill pleased that they were beginning to offer it to him. The good people of the provinces we visited were not very far wrong; for the splendour that surrounded us, the sumptuousness of that military yet brilliant Court, the strict ceremonial, the imperious tone of the master, the submission of all about him, and, finally, the expectation that homage should be paid the wife of the first magistrate, to whom the Republic certainly owed none—all this strongly resembled the progress of a king.

After these audiences, Bonaparte generally rode out on horseback; he showed himself to the people, who followed him with acclamations; he visited the public monuments and the manufactures, but always in a hurried way, for he could never get over that precipitation which gave him an ill-bred air. Afterwards he would give a dinner, or attend a fête which had been prepared for him, and this was always the most wearisome part of the business to him. "I am not made for pleasure," he would say, in a melancholy tone. Then he would leave the town, after having received petitions, attended to complaints, and distributed alms and presents. He was accustomed, when on a journey of this sort, to ascertain at each town what public establishments were wanting there; then he would order them to be founded, in commemoration of his visit, and the inhabitants would load him with blessings for this munificence. But shortly afterwards a mandate from the Minister of the Interior would arrive, drawn up in this form: "In conformity with the gracious permission of the First Consul" (later it was "the Emperor"), "you are directed, citizen Mayors, to have such and such a building constructed, taking care that the expenses shall be defrayed by the funds of your Commune." Thus these towns would suddenly find themselves obliged to alter the disposition of their funds, very often at

a moment when they were not sufficient for necessary expenses. The Prefect took care, however, that the orders were executed, or at least the most useful portion of them; and it must be admitted that, from one end of France to the other, everything was being embellished, and that the general prosperity was such that new works, even of the most important nature, might safely be undertaken everywhere.

At Arras, at Lille, and at Dunkirk, we had similar receptions; but it seemed to me that the enthusiasm cooled down when we got beyond the former boundaries of France. At Ghent especially, we detected some coldness in the popular greeting. In vain did the authorities endeavour to stir up the zeal of the inhabitants; they were curious, but not enthusiastic. Bonaparte was a little annoyed, and inclined to proceed without delay; he thought better of this, however, and said to his wife, in the evening, "These people are bigoted and under the influence of the priests; we must remain a long time at church to-morrow, and propitiate the clergy by some favour. In this way we shall regain lost ground." Next day he attended at High Mass with every appearance of devoutness; he talked to the Bishop, whom he completely captivated, and by degrees he obtained the popular acclamations he desired. At Ghent he met the daughters of the Duc de Villequier, formerly one of the four Gentle-

men of the Chamber to the King. These ladies were nieces of the Bishop, and Bonaparte restored to them the beautiful estate of Villequier, with its large revenues. I had the happiness of contributing to that restitution, by urging it with all my might, both upon Bonaparte and upon his wife. The two amiable young ladies have never forgotten this to me, When I assured Bonaparte of their gratitude, "Ah," said he, "gratitude! That is a poetic word which has no meaning in times of revolution, and what I have just done would not prevent your friends from rejoicing, if some Royalist emissary should succeed in assassinating me during this journey." My face betrayed the surprise with which I heard him, and he continued, "You are young; you do not know what political hatred is. It is like a pair of spectacles, one sees everybody, every opinion, or every sentiment only through the glass of one's passions. Hence, nothing is bad or good of itself, but simply according to the party to which one belongs. In reality, this mode of seeing is convenient, and we profit by it; for we also have our spectacles, and if we do not see things through our passions, we see them through our interests."

"But," I replied, "where, in such a system, do you place the applause which you do care to win? For what class of men do you spend your life in great and often perilous enterprises?"

"Ah," he answered, "one cannot avoid one's destiny; he who is called cannot resist. Besides, human pride finds the public it desires in that ideal world which is called posterity. He who believes that, a hundred years hence, a fine poem, or even a line in one, will recall a great action of his own, or that a painting will commemorate it, has his imagination fired by that idea. The battle-field has no dangers, the cannon roars in vain; to him it is only a sound which, a thousand years hence, will carry a brave man's name to the ears of our distant descendants."

"I shall never be able to understand," I continued, "how a man can expose himself to every sort of danger for fame's sake, if his own inward sentiment be only contempt for the men of his own time."

Here Bonaparte interrupted me quickly. "I do not despise men, madame—that is a thing you must never say; and I particularly esteem the French."

I smiled at this abrupt declaration, and as he guessed why, he smiled also; and approaching me and pinching my ear, which was, as I have already said, a trick of his when he was in a good humour, he repeated, "Do you hear, madame? you must never say that I despise the French."

From Ghent we went to Antwerp, where we were received with a special ceremony. On occasions of visits from kings and princes, the people of Ant-

werp are in the habit of parading through their streets a giant, who never makes his appearance except on such solemn festivals. Although we were neither king nor prince, we were obliged to yield to the people's wish in this matter, and it put Bonaparte in good humour with the town of Antwerp. He occupied himself much while there with the important extension which he designed to give its harbour, and gave orders for the commencement of the great works which have since been executed there.

On the way from Antwerp to Brussels we stopped at Malines for a few hours, and there we saw the new Archbishop, M. de Roquelaure.* He was Bishop of Senlis under Louis XVI., and had been the intimate friend of my great-uncle, the Count de Vergennes. I had seen a great deal of him in my childhood, and I was glad to meet him again. Bonaparte talked to him in a very insinuating manner. At this period he affected great esteem for the priests, and care for their interests. He knew how steadily religion supports royalty, and he hoped that, through the priests, he might get the people taught that catechism which we have since

* M. de Roquelaure had been Bishop of Senlis and Almoner to the King. He became Archbishop of Malines in 1802. The Emperor replaced him in 1808 by the Abbé de Pradt. He was a member of the Académie Française, and died in 1818. He did not belong to the family of the Duc de Roquelaure.—P. R.

seen, in which all who did not love and obey the Emperor were threatened with eternal condemnation. For the first time since the Revolution, the clergy found the Government occupying itself with their welfare, and giving them rank and consideration. They showed themselves grateful, and were useful to Bonaparte until the moment came when he endeavoured to impose his ever-growing despotism on their consciences, and the priests had to choose between him and their duty. At this time, however, the words, "He has re-established religion," * were in every pious mouth, and told immensely in his favour.

Our entry into Brussels was magnificent. Several fine regiments awaited the First Consul at the gate, where he mounted his horse. Madame Bonaparte found a superb carriage, presented to her by the city, awaiting her; the streets were lavishly decorated, cannon were fired, the bells were rung; the numerous clergy were assembled in great pomp on the steps of all the churches; there was an immense crowd of the population, and also many foreigners, and the weather was beautiful. I was enchanted. Our stay in Brussels was a succession of brilliant fêtes. The French Ministers, Consul Lebrun, the

* Bonaparte, knowing that in Belgium he would have to deal with religious people, took Cardinal Caprara with him. The Cardinal was extremely useful.

Envoys from the foreign Courts who had business to arrange, came to meet us there. At Brussels I heard M. de Talleyrand reply in an adroit and flattering manner to a question suddenly put to him by Bonaparte; who asked him how he had so rapidly made his great fortune? "Nothing could be more simple," replied M. de Talleyrand; "I bought stock on the 17th Brûmaire, and I sold it again on the 19th."

One Sunday we were to visit the cathedral in great state. M. de Rémusat went early in the morning to the church, to arrange the ceremony. He had been directed not to object to any honour which the clergy might propose to pay to the First Consul on this occasion. As, however, it was arranged that the priests should go to the great doors with the canopy and the cross to receive the First Consul, a question arose whether Madame Bonaparte was to share that distinction with him, and Bonaparte did not venture to bring her so prominently forward. She was, therefore, placed in a tribune with the Second Consul. At twelve o'clock, the clergy left the altar, and proceeded to the grand entrance of the magnificent Church of Sainte Gudule. They awaited the arrival of the First Consul, but he did not appear. At first they were astonished, then alarmed; but they presently perceived that he had slipped into

the church, and seated himself on the throne which was prepared for him. The priests, surprised and disconcerted, returned to the sanctuary, and commenced divine service. The fact was, just as he was setting out, Bonaparte was told that, on a similar occasion, Charles V. had preferred to enter the Church of Sainte Gudule by a little side-door which had ever after been called by his name; and it seemed he had taken a fancy to use the same entrance, hoping, perhaps, that henceforth it would be called the door of Charles V. and of Bonaparte.

One morning, the numerous and magnificent regiments which had been brought to Brussels were reviewed by the Consul, or, as on this occasion I ought to call him, the General. His reception by the troops was nothing short of rapturous. It was well worth seeing how he talked to the soldiers—how he questioned them one after the other respecting their campaigns or their wounds; taking particular interest in the men who had accompanied him to Egypt. I have heard Madame Bonaparte say that her husband was in the constant habit of poring over the list of what are called the *cadres* of the army, at night, before he slept. He would go to sleep repeating the names of the corps, and even those of some of the individuals who composed them; he kept those names in a corner of his memory, and this habit came to his aid

when he wanted to recognize a soldier, and to give him the pleasure of a cheering word from his general. He spoke to the subalterns in a tone of good fellowship, which delighted them all, as he reminded them of their common feats of arms. Afterwards, when his armies became so numerous, when his battles became so deadly, he disdained to exercise this kind of fascination. Besides, death had extinguished so many remembrances, that in a few years it became difficult for him to find any great number of the companions of his early exploits; and when he addressed his soldiers before leading them into battle, it was as a perpetually-renewed posterity, to which the preceding and destroyed army had bequeathed its glory. But even this sombre style of encouragement availed for a long time, with a nation which believed itself to be fulfilling its destiny, while sending its sons year after year to die for Bonaparte.

I have said that Bonaparte took great pleasure in recalling his campaign in Egypt; it was, indeed, his favourite theme of discourse. He had taken with him, on the journey I am describing, M. Monge the *savant*, whom he had made a senator, and whom he liked particularly, for the sole reason that he was among the number of the members of the Institute who had gone with him to Egypt. Bonaparte often talked to him of that expedition—"that land of

poetry," he would say, "which was trodden by Cæsar and Pompey." He would speak with enthusiasm of the time when he appeared before the amazed Orientals like a new Prophet; for he prized the sway he exercised over imagination more highly than any other, for it was the most complete of all. "In France," he said, "one must conquer everything at the point of demonstration. In Egypt we did not require our mathematics; did we, Monge?"

It was at Brussels that I began to get accustomed to M. de Talleyrand, and to shake off the earlier impression made by his disdainful manner and sarcastic disposition. The idleness of a Court life makes the day seem a hundred hours long, and it happened that we often passed many of those hours together, waiting until it should please Bonaparte to come in or to go out. During one of these weary waits I heard M. de Talleyrand complain that his family had not realized any of the plans he had formed for them. His brother, Archambault de Périgord, had just been sent into exile for having indulged in the sarcastic language common to the family. He had, however, applied it to persons of rank too high to be ridiculed with impunity, and he had also given offence by refusing his daughter in marriage to Eugène de Beauharnais, to whom he had preferred

Count Just de Noailles. M. de Talleyrand, who was quite as anxious as Madame Bonaparte that his niece should marry Beauharnais, blamed his brother severely, and I could perfectly understand that such an alliance would have been advantageous to his personal policy. One of the first things that struck me, when I had talked for a little while with M. de Talleyrand, was the entire absence of any kind of illusion or enthusiasm on his part, with regard to all that was passing around us. Every one else was more or less under the influence of excited feelings. The implicit obedience of the military officers might easily pass for zeal, and, in the case of some of them, it really was devotion. The Ministers affected or felt profound admiration; M. Maret paraded his worship of the First Consul on every occasion; Berthier was happy in the sincerity of his attachment; in short, every one seemed to feel something. M. de Rémusat tried to like his post, and to esteem the man who had conferred it on him. As for myself, I cultivated every opportunity of emotion and of self-deception; and the calm indifference of M. de Talleyrand amazed me. "Good heavens!" I said to him on one occasion, "how is it possible that you can live and work without experiencing any emotion either from what passes around us, or from your own actions?" "Ah! what a true woman you are, and how young!" he replied; and then he began to ridi-

cule me, as he did every one else. His jests wounded my feelings, yet they made me laugh. I was angry with myself for being amused, and yet, because my vanity was pleased at my own comprehension of his wit, less shocked than I ought to have been at the hardness of his heart. However, I did not yet know him, and it was not till much later, when I had got over the restraint he imposed on every one at first, that I observed the curious mixture of qualities in his character.

On leaving Brussels we went to Liège and Maestricht, and re-entered the former boundaries of France by way of Mézières and Sedan. Madame Bonaparte was charming during this journey, and left an impression on my mind of her kindness and graciousness which, as I found fifteen years afterwards, time could not efface.

I was delighted to return to Paris, and to find myself once more among my family, and free from the restraint of Court life. M. de Rémusat, like myself, was tired of the idle, yet restless, pomp of the last six weeks; and we rejoiced in the quiet of our happy home.

On his return to Saint Cloud, Bonaparte and Madame Bonaparte received complimentary addresses from the Corps Législatif, the Tribunals, etc.; the First Consul also received a visit from the Corps Diplomatique. Shortly after this, he added a new dignity

to the Legion of Honour by appointing M. de Lacépède its Chancellor. Since the fall of Bonaparte, certain liberal writers, and among others Madame de Staël, have endeavoured to stigmatize that institution by reviving the recollection of an English caricature which represented Bonaparte cutting up the *bonnet rouge* of the Revolution to make the crosses of the Legion. But if he had not misused that institution as he misused everything, there would have been nothing to blame in the invention of a recompense which was an inducement to every kind of merit, without being a great expense to the State. What splendid deeds on the battle-field has that little bit of ribbon inspired! If it had been accorded to merit only in every walk of life, if it had never been given from motives of caprice or individual favour, the idea of assimilating all services rendered to the country, no matter of what nature, and bestowing a similar decoration upon them all, would have been noble. The institutions of Bonaparte in France, ought not to be indiscriminately condemned. Most of them have a commendable purpose, and might have been made of advantage to the nation. But his insatiable greed of power perverted them. So intolerant was he of any obstacles, that he could not even endure those which arose from his own institutions, and he instantly set them aside by an arbitrary decision.

Having in the course of this year (1803) created the different senatorships, he gave a Chancellor, a Treasurer, and Prætors to the Senate. M. de Laplace was the Chancellor. Bonaparte honoured him because he was a *savant*, and liked him because he was a skilful flatterer. The two Prætors were General Lefebvre and General Sérrurier. M. de Fargues * was the Treasurer.

The Republican year ended as usual in the middle of September, and the anniversary of the Republic was celebrated by popular fêtes, and kept with royal pomp at the palace of the Tuileries. We heard at the same time that the Hanoverians, who had been conquered by General Mortier, had celebrated the First Consul's birthday with great rejoicings. Thus, by degrees, by appearing at first at the head of all, and then quite alone, he accustomed Europe to see France in his person only, and presented himself everywhere as the sole representative of the nation.

Bonaparte, who well knew that he would meet with resistance from those who held by the old ways of thinking, applied himself early and skilfully to gain the young, to whom he opened all the doors of advancement in life. He attached auditors to the different ministries, and gave free scope to ambition, whether in the military or in the civil careers. He

* M. de Fargues had been useful to Bonaparte on the 18th Brûmaire.

often said that he preferred to every other advantage that of governing a new people, and the youthful generation afforded him that novelty.

The institution of the jury was also discussed in that year. I have heard that Bonaparte himself had no liking for it; but as he intended later on to govern rather by himself than with the assistance of Assemblies which he feared, he was obliged to make some concessions to their most distinguished members. By degrees, all the laws were presented to the Council by the Ministers, and were either changed into decrees, which, without any other sanction, were put in force from one end of France to the other; or else, having been received with the silent approbation of the Corps Législatif, they were passed with no more trouble than that imposed upon reporters of the Council, who had to preface them by a discourse, so that they might have some show of necessity.

Lycées were also established in all the important towns, and the study of ancient languages, which had been abolished during the Revolution, was again made obligatory in public education.

It was at this time that the flotilla of flat-bottomed boats, which was to be used for the invasion of England, was being constructed. Day by day it was more confidently asserted that in fine weather it would be possible for the flotilla to reach the

shores of England without being impeded by ships of war. It was said that Bonaparte himself would command the expedition, and such an enterprise did not seem to be beyond the bounds of his daring or of his good fortune. Our newspapers represented England as agitated and alarmed, and in reality the English Government was not quite exempt from apprehension. The *Moniteur* still complained bitterly of the English liberal journals, and the gauntlet of wordy war was taken up on both sides. In France the law of conscription was put in action, and large bodies of troops were raised. Sometimes people asked what was the meaning of this great armament, and of such paragraphs as the following, which appeared in the *Moniteur*:—"The English journalists suspect that the great preparations for war, which the First Consul has just commenced in Italy, are intended for an Egyptian expedition."

No explanation was given. The French nation placed confidence in Bonaparte of a kind like that which some credulous minds feel in magic; and as his success was believed to be infallible, it was not difficult to obtain a tacit consent to all his operations from a people naturally prone to worship success. At that time a few wise heads began to perceive that he would not be useful to us; but as the general dread of the revolutionary government still proclaimed him to be necessary, no opposition

could be made to his authority without the risk of facilitating the revolt of that party, which it was believed he alone could control.

In the mean time he was always active and energetic, and as it did not suit him that the public mind should be left to repose, which leads to reflection, he aroused apprehension and disturbance in every way that might be useful to himself. A letter from the Count d'Artois, taken from the *Morning Chronicle*, was printed about this time; it offered the services of the *émigrés* to the King of England, in case of a descent upon his coasts. Rumours were spread of certain attempts made in the eastern departments; and since the war in La Vendée had been followed by the inglorious proceedings of the Chouans, people had become accustomed to the idea that any political movement set on foot in that part of France had pillage and incendiarism for its objects. In fact, there seemed no chance of quietness, except in the duration of the established Government; and when certain friends of liberty deplored its loss—for the new liberal institutions were of little value in their eyes because they were the work of absolute power—they were met with the following argument, which was perhaps justified by circumstances:—"After the storm through which we have passed, and amid the strife of so many parties, superior force only can give us liberty, and so long as that force tends to

promote principles of order and morality, we ought not to regard ourselves as straying from the right road; for the creator will disappear, but that which he has created will remain with us."

While more or less disturbance was thus kept up by his orders, Bonaparte himself maintained a peaceful attitude. He had returned to his usual orderly and busy life at Saint Cloud, and we passed our days as I have already described. His brothers were all employed*—Joseph, at the camp at Boulogne; Louis, at the Council of State; Jérome, the youngest, in America, whither he had been sent, and where he was well received by the Anglo-Americans. Bonaparte's sisters, who were now in the enjoyment of wealth, vied with each other in the decoration of the houses which the First Consul had given them, and in the luxury of their furniture and equipment. Eugène de Beauharnais occupied himself exclusively in his military duties; his sister lived a dull and quiet life.

Madame Leclerc had inspired Prince Borghèse (who had not long arrived in France from Rome) with an ardent attachment, and she returned it. The prince asked her hand of Bonaparte, but his demand was at first refused. I do not know what

* It was at the end of the autumn or the beginning of winter, in 1803, that Lucien married Madame Jouberthon and quarrelled with his brother.

the motive of his refusal was, but think it may perhaps have been dictated by his vanity, which would have been hurt by the supposition that he desired to be relieved of any family claims; and probably, also, he did not wish to appear to accept a first proposal with alacrity. But as the *liaison* between his sister and the prince became publicly known, the Consul consented at last to legitimize it by a marriage, which took place at Mortefontaine while he was at Boulogne.

He set out to visit the camp and the flotilla on the 3rd of November, 1803. This time his journey was of an entirely military character. He was accompanied only by the generals of his guard, by his aides-de-camp, and by M. de Rémusat.

When they arrived at Pont de Briques, a little village about a league from Boulogne, where Bonaparte had fixed his head-quarters, my husband fell dangerously ill. On hearing of his illness I set out to join him, and arrived at Pont de Briques in the middle of the night. Entirely occcupied by my anxiety, I had thought of nothing but the state in which I should find the invalid; and when I got out of the carriage, I was rather disconcerted by finding myself alone in the midst of a camp, and not knowing what the First Consul would think of my arrival. I was reassured, however, by the servants, who told me I was expected,

and that a room had been set apart for me two days before. I passed the remainder of the night there, waiting until daylight before I saw my husband, as I did not like to risk disturbing him. I found him greatly pulled down by illness, but he was so rejoiced to see me that I congratulated myself on having come without asking permission.

In the morning Bonaparte sent for me. I was so agitated that I could hardly speak. He saw this the moment I entered the room, and he kissed me, made me sit down, and restored me to composure by his first words. "I was expecting you," he said. "Your presence will cure your husband." At these words I burst into tears. He appeared touched, and endeavoured to console me. Then he directed me to come every day to dine and breakfast with him, as he said, laughing "I must look after a woman of your age among so many soldiers." He asked me how I had left his wife. A little while before his departure, some more secret visits from Mademoiselle Georges had given rise to fresh domestic disagreements. "She troubles herself," he said, "a great deal more than is necessary. Josephine is always afraid that I shall fall seriously in love. Does she not know, then, that I am not made for love? For what is love? A passion which sets all the universe on one side, and on the other the beloved object. I certainly am not of a

nature to give myself up to any such exclusive feeling. What, then, do these fancies, into which my affections do not enter, matter to her? This," he continued, looking at me seriously, "is what her friends ought to dwell upon; and, above all, they ought not to try to increase their influence over her by fostering her jealousy." There was in his last words a tone of suspicion and severity which I did not deserve, and I think he knew that very well; but he never missed an opportunity of carrying out his favourite system, which was to keep one's mind what he called "breathless;" that is to say, constantly anxious.

He remained at Pont de Briques for ten days after I arrived there. My husband's malady was a painful one, but the doctors were not alarmed. With the exception of one quarter of an hour during which the First Consul's breakfast lasted, I spent the morning with my dear invalid. Bonaparte went to the camp every day, reviewed the troops, visited the flotilla, and looked on at some slight skirmishes, or rather at an exchange of cannon balls, between us and the English, who constantly cruised in front of the harbour and tried to molest our workmen.

At six o'clock Bonaparte returned, and then I was summoned. Occasionally some of the officers of his household, the Minister of Marine or the Minister of Public Works, who had accompanied him, were

invited to dinner. At other times we dined *tête-à-tête*, and then he would talk on a multitude of subjects. He spoke of his own character, and described himself as having always been of a melancholy temperament —far more so than any of his comrades. My memory has faithfully preserved all he said to me. The following is a correct summary of it:—

"I was educated," he said, "at a military school, and I showed no aptitude for anything but the exact sciences. Every one said of me, 'That child will never be good for anything but geometry.' I kept aloof from my schoolfellows. I had chosen a little corner in the school-grounds, where I would sit and dream at my ease; for I have always liked reverie. When my companions tried to usurp possession of this corner, I defended it with all my might. I already knew by instinct that my will was to override that of others, and that what pleased me was to belong to me. I was not liked at school. It takes time to make one's self liked; and even when I had nothing to do, I always felt vaguely that I had no time to lose.

"I entered the service, and soon grew tired of garrison work. I began to read novels, and they interested me deeply. I even tried to write some. This occupation brought out something in my imagination which mingled itself with the positive knowledge I had acquired; and I often let my-

self dream, in order that I might afterwards measure my dreams by the compass of my reason. I threw myself into an ideal world, and I endeavoured to find out in what precise points it differed from the actual world in which I lived. I have always liked analysis; and if I were to be seriously in love, I should analyze my love bit by bit. *Why?* and *How?* are questions so useful that they cannot be too often asked. I conquered, rather than studied, history; that is to say, I did not care to retain, and did not retain, anything that could not give me a new idea; I disdained all that was useless, but took possession of certain results which pleased me.

"I did not understand much about the Revolution, but I approved of it. Equality, which was to elevate myself, attracted me. On the 20th of June I was in Paris, and I saw the populace marching upon the Tuileries. I have never liked popular movements, and I was indignant at the violent deeds of that day. I thought the ringleaders in the attack very imprudent, for I said to myself, 'It is not they who will profit by this Revolution.' But when I was told that Louis had put the red cap on his head, I came to the conclusion that he had ceased to reign; for in politics there is no resurrection.

"On the 10th of August I felt, that, had I been called upon, I would have defended the King. I

set myself against those who founded the Republic by the people. Besides, I saw men in plain clothes attacking men in uniform, and I could not stand that.

"One evening I was at the theatre; it was the 12th Vendémiaire. I heard it said about me that next day *du train* might be looked for. You know that was the slang phrase of the Parisians, who regarded the various changes of government with indifference, as those changes did not disturb their business, their pleasures, or even their dinners. After the Terror, people were satisfied with anything, so that they were allowed to live quietly.

"I heard it said that the Assembly was sitting in permanence; I went there, and found all confusion and hesitation. Suddenly I heard a voice say from the middle of the hall, 'If any one here knows the address of General Bonaparte, he is requested to go and tell him that he is expected at the committee of the Assembly.' I have always observed with interest how chance interferes in certain events, and this chance decided me. I went to the committee.

"There I found several terrified deputies, Cambacérès amongst others. They expected to be attacked the next day, and they could not come to any resolution. They asked my advice; I answered by asking for guns. This proposition so alarmed them,

that the entire night passed without their coming to any decision. In the morning there was very bad news. Then they put the whole business into my hands, and afterwards began to discuss whether they had the right to repel force by force. 'Are you going to wait,' I asked them, 'until the people give you permission to fire upon them? I am committed to this matter; you have appointed me to defend you; it is right that you should leave me to act.' Thereupon I left these lawyers to stultify themselves with words. I put the troops in motion, pointed two cannons with terrible effect from Saint Roch; the army of citizens and the conspirators were swept away in an instant.

"But I had shed Parisian blood! What sacrilege! It was necessary to obliterate the effect of such a deed. I felt myself more and more urgently called upon to do something. I asked for the command of the army of Italy. Everything had to be put in order in that army, both men and things. Only youth can have patience, because it has the future before it. I set out for Italy with ill-trained soldiers, who were, however, full of zeal and daring. In the midst of the troops I had waggons placed, and escorted on the march, although they were empty. These I called the treasure-chests of the army. I put it in the order of the day that shoes should be distributed to the recruits: no one would wear

them. I promised my soldiers that fortune and glory should await us behind the Alps; I kept my word, and ever since then the army would follow me to the end of the world.

"I made a splendid campaign; I became a person of importance in Europe. On the one hand, with the assistance of my orders of the day, I maintained the revolutionary system; on the other hand, I secretly conciliated the *émigrés*, by allowing them to form certain hopes. It is easy to deceive that party, because it starts always not from what exists, but from what it wishes to believe. I received magnificent offers of recompense if I would follow the example of General Monk; the Pretender even wrote to me in his vague and florid style; I conquered the Pope more effectually by not going to Rome, than if I had burnt his capital. In short, I became important and formidable; and the Directory, although I made them very uneasy, could not bring any formal accusation against me. I have been reproached with having favoured the 18th Fructidor; they might as well reproach me with having supported the Revolution. It was necessary to take advantage of the Revolution, and to derive some profit from the blood that had been shed. What! were we to give ourselves up unconditionally to the princes of the House of Bourbon, who would have thrown in our teeth all the misfortunes

we had suffered since their departure, and would have imposed silence upon us, because we had solicited their return? Were we to exchange our victorious flag for that white banner which had mingled with the standards of our enemies? Was I to content myself with a few millions and a petty dukedom? The part of Monk is not a difficult one to play,—it would have given me less trouble than the Egyptian campaign, or even than the 18th Brûmaire; but can anything teach princes who have never seen a battle-field? To what did the return of Charles II. lead the English, except to the dethronement of James? Had it been necessary, I should have dethroned the Bourbons a second time, so that the best thing they could have done would have been to get rid of me.

"When I returned to France, I found public opinion in a lethargic condition. In Paris, and Paris is France, people can never interest themselves in things if they do not care about persons. The customs of an old monarchy had taught them to personify everything. This habit of mind is bad for a people who seriously desire liberty; but Frenchmen can no longer desire anything seriously, except perhaps it be equality; and even that they would renounce willingly, if every one could flatter himself that he was the first. To be equals, with everybody uppermost, is the secret of the vanity

of all of you; every man among you must, therefore, be given the hope of rising.) The great difficulty of the Directory was that no one cared about them, and that people began to care a good deal about me. I do not know what would have happened to me had I not conceived the happy thought of going to Egypt.

"When I embarked I did not know but that I might be bidding an eternal farewell to France; but I had no doubt that she would recall me.

"The charm of Oriental conquest drew my thoughts away from Europe more than I should have believed possible. My imagination interfered this time also with my actions; but I think it died out at Saint Jean d'Acre. However that may be, I shall never allow it to interfere with me again.

"In Egypt I found myself free from the wearisome restraints of civilization. I dreamed all sorts of things, and I saw how all that I dreamed might be realized. I created a religion; I pictured myself on the road to Asia, mounted on an elephant, with a turban on my head, and in my hand a new Koran, which I should compose according to my own ideas. I would have the combined experience of two worlds with which to set about my enterprise; I was to have ransacked, for my own advantage, the whole domain of history; I was to have attacked the English power in India, and renewed my relations

with old Europe by my conquest. The time I passed in Egypt was the most delightful part of my life, for it was the most ideal. Fate decided against my dreams; I received letters from France; I saw that there was not a moment to lose. I reverted to the realities of life, and I returned to Paris—to Paris, where the gravest interests of the country are discussed in the *entr'acte* of an opera.

"The Directory trembled at my return. I was very cautious; that is one of the epochs of my life in which I have acted with the soundest judgment. I saw the Abbé Siéyès, and promised him that his verbose constitution should be put into effect; I received the chiefs of the Jacobins and the agents of the Bourbons; I listened to advice from everybody, but I only gave it in the interest of my own plans. I hid myself from the people, because I knew that when the time came, curiosity to see me would make them run after me. Every one was taken in my toils; and when I became the head of the State, there was not a party in France which did not build some special hope upon my success."

CHAPTER IV.

1803–1804.

Continuation of the First Consul's conversations at Boulogne—Reading of the tragedy of "Philippe Auguste"—My new impressions—Return to Paris—Madame Bonaparte's jealousy—Winter fêtes of 1804—M. de Fontanes—M. Fouché—Savary—Pichegru—Arrest of General Moreau.

ONE evening, while we were at Boulogne, Bonaparte turned the conversation upon literature. Lemercier, the poet, whom Bonaparte liked, had just finished a tragedy, called *Philippe Auguste*, which contained allusions to the First Consul, and had brought the manuscript to him. Bonaparte took it into his head to read this production aloud to me. It was amusing to hear a man who was always in a hurry when he had nothing to do, trying to read Alexandrine verses, of which he did not know the metre, and pronouncing them so badly, that he did not seem to understand what he read. Besides, he no sooner opened any book than he wanted to criticise it. I asked him to give me the manuscript, and I read it out myself. Then he began to talk; he took the play

out of my hand, struck out whole passages, made several marginal notes, and found fault with the plot and the characters. He did not run much risk of spoiling the piece, for it was very bad.* Singularly enough, when he had done reading, he told me he did not wish the author to know that all these erasures and corrections were made by so important a hand, and he directed me to take them upon myself. I objected to this, as may be supposed. I had great difficulty in convincing him that, as it might be thought strange that even he should thus have meddled with an author's manuscript, it would be contrary to all the *convenances* for me to have taken such a liberty. "Well, well," said he, "perhaps you are right; but on this, as on every other occasion, I own I do not like that vague and levelling phrase, the *convenances*, which you women are always using. It is a device of fools to raise themselves to the level of people of intellect; a sort of social gag, which hinders the strong mind and only serves the weak. It may be all very well for women; they have not much to do in this life, but you must be aware that I, for example, cannot be bound by the *convenances*."

"But," I replied, "is not the application of these laws to the conduct of life like that of the dramatic unities to the drama? They give order and regu-

* This piece was never acted, nor, I believe, printed.—P. R.

larity, and they do not really trammel genius, except when it would, without their control, err against good taste."

"Ah, good taste! That is another of those classical words which I do not adopt.* It is perhaps my own fault, but there are certain rules which mean nothing to me. For example, what is called 'style,' good or bad, does not affect me. I care only for the force of the thought. I used to like Ossian, but it was for the same reason which made me delight in the murmur of the winds and waves. In Egypt I tried to read the 'Iliad;' but I got tired of it. As for French poets, I understand none of them except Corneille. That man understood politics, and if he had been trained to public affairs, he would have been a statesman. I think I appreciate him more truly than any one else does, because I exclude all the dramatic sentiments from my view of him. For example, it is only lately I have come to understand the *dénouement* of 'Cinna.' At first I regarded it as merely a contrivance for a pathetic fifth act; for really, clemency, properly speaking, is such a poor little virtue, when it is not founded on policy, that to turn Augustus suddenly into a kind-hearted prince appeared to me an unworthy climax. However,

* M. de Talleyrand once said to the Emperor, "Good taste is your personal enemy; if you could have got rid of it by cannon balls, it would long ago have ceased to exist."

I saw Monvel act in the tragedy one night, and the mystery of the great conception was revealed to me. He pronounced the 'Soyons amis, Cinna,' in so cunning and subtle a tone, that I saw at once the action was only a feint of the tyrant, and I approved as a calculation what had appeared to me silly as a sentiment. The line should always be so delivered, that, of all those who hear it, only Cinna is deceived.

"As for Racine, he pleases me in *Iphigenie*. That piece, whilst it lasts, makes one breathe the poetic air of Greece. In *Brittanicus* he has been trammelled by Tacitus, against whom I am prejudiced, because he does not sufficiently explain his meaning. The tragedies of Voltaire are passionate, but they do not go deeply into human nature. For instance, his Mahomet is neither a prophet nor an Arab. He is an impostor, who might have been educated at the École Polytechnique, for he uses power as I might use it in an age like the present. And then, the murder of the father by the son is a useless crime. Great men are never cruel except from necessity.

"As for comedy, it interests me about as much as the gossip of your drawing-rooms. I understand your admiration of Molière, but I do not share it; he has placed his personages in situations which have no attractions for me."

From these observations it is plain that Bona-

parte cared only to observe human nature when it was struggling with the great chances of life, and that man in the abstract interested him little. In conversations of this kind the time I spent at Boulogne with the First Consul was passed, and at the close of my sojourn there I underwent the first bitter experience that inspired me with a mistrust of the persons among whom I was obliged to live at Court. The officers of the household would not believe that a woman could remain for hours together with their master, simply talking with him on matters of general interest, and they drew conclusions which were injurious to my character. I may now venture to say that the purity of my mind, and my life-long attachment to my husband, prevented my even conceiving the possibility of such a suspicion as that which was formed in the Consul's ante-chamber, whilst I was conversing with him in his *salon*. When Bonaparte returned to Paris, his aides-de-camp talked about my long interviews with him, and Madame Bonaparte took fright at their stories, so that when, after a month's stay at Pont de Briques, my husband was sufficiently recovered to bear the journey, and we returned to Paris, my jealous patroness received me coldly.

I returned full of gratitude towards the First Consul. He had received me so kindly; he had shown

such interest in the state of my husband's health; his attention to me had so much soothed my troubled and anxious mind, and had been so great a resource in that solitary place; and I was so much flattered by the pleasure he seemed to take in my society, that on my return I told every one, with the eager gratitude of my twenty-one years, of the extreme kindness he had shown me. One friend, who was really attached to me, advised me to be careful of my words, and apprised me of the impression they had made. I remember to this hour that her hint struck like a dagger to my heart. It was the first time I had suffered injustice; my youth and all my feelings revolted against such an accusation. Stern experience only can steel us against the unjust judgments of the world, and perhaps we ought to regret the time when they had the power to wound us deeply. My friend's warning, however, explained Madame Bonaparte's conduct towards me. One day, when I was more hurt by this than usual, I could not refrain from saying to her, with tears in my eyes, "What, madame! do you suspect me?" As she was very kind, and always easily touched by passing emotions, she embraced me, and thenceforth treated me with her former cordiality. But she did not understand my feelings. There was nothing in her mind which corresponded to my just indignation; and, without endeavouring to ascertain

whether my relations with her husband at Boulogne had been such as they were represented to her, she was content to conclude that in any case the affair had been merely temporary, since I did not, when under her own eyes, depart from my usual reserve towards Bonaparte. In order to justify herself, she told me that the Bonaparte family had spread injurious reports against me during my absence. "Do you not perceive," I asked her, "that, rightly or wrongly, it is believed here that my tender attachment to you, madame, makes me clear-sighted to what is going on, and that, feeble as my counsels are, they may help you to act with prudence? Political jealousy spreads suspicion broadcast everywhere, and, insignificant as I am, I do believe they want to make you quarrel with me." Madame Bonaparte perceived the justice of my observation; but she had not the least idea that I could feel aggrieved because it had not occurred to herself in the first instance. She acknowledged that she had reproached her husband about me, and he had evidently amused himself by leaving her in doubt. These occurrences opened my eyes to the character of the people among whom I lived to an extent which alarmed me and upset all my former feelings towards them. I began to feel that the ground which I had trodden, until then, with all the confidence of ignorance, was not firm; I knew that from the kind of

annoyance I had just experienced I should never again be free.

The First Consul, on leaving Boulogne, had declared, in the order of the day, that he was pleased with the army, and in the *Moniteur* of the 12th November, 1803, we read the following:—"It was remarked as an omen that, in the course of the excavations for the First Consul's camp, a war hatchet was found, which probably belonged to the Roman army that invaded Britain. There were also medals of William the Conqueror found at Ambleteuse, where the First Consul's tent was pitched. It must be admitted that these circumstances are singular, and they appear still more strange when it is borne in mind that when General Bonaparte visited the ruins of Pelasium, in Egypt, he found there a medallion of Julius Cæsar."

The allusion was not a very fortunate one, for, notwithstanding the medallion of Julius Cæsar Bonaparte was obliged to leave Egypt; but these little parallels, dictated by the ingenious flattery of M. Maret, pleased his master immensely, and Bonaparte was confident that they were not without effect upon the country.

Every effort was made at that time by the press to excite the popular imagination on the subject of the invasion of England. I do not know whether Bonaparte really believed that such an adventure

was possible, but he appeared to do so, and the expense incurred in the construction of flat-bottomed boats was considerable. The war of words between the English newspapers and the *Moniteur* continued. We read in the *Times:* "It is said that the French have made Hanover a desert, and they are now about to abandon it;" to which a note in the *Moniteur* immediately replied: "Yes, when you abandon Malta." The Bishops issued pastorals, in which they exhorted the nation to arm itself for a just war. "Choose men of good courage," said the Bishop of Arras, "and go forth to fight Amalek. Bossuet has said, 'To submit to the public orders is to submit to the orders of God, who establishes empires.'"

This quotation from Bossuet reminds me of a story which M. Bourlier, the Bishop of Evreux, used to tell. It related to the time when the Council was assembled at Paris with a view to inducing the Bishops to oppose the decrees of the Pope. "Sometimes," said the Bishop of Evreux, "the Emperor would have us all summoned, and would begin a theological discussion with us. He would address himself to the most recalcitrant among us, and say, 'My religion is that of Bossuet; he is my Father of the Church; he defended our liberties. I want to commence his work and to maintain your dignity. Do you understand me?' Speaking thus,

and pale with anger, he would clap his hand on the hilt of his sword. The ardour with which he was ready to defend us made me tremble, and this singular amalgamation of the name of Bossuet, and the word Liberty, with his own threatening gestures, would have made me smile, if I had not been too heavy-hearted at the prospect of the hard times which I foresaw for the Church."

I now return to the winter of 1804. This winter passed as the preceding one had done, in balls and fêtes at Court and in Paris, and in the organization of the new laws, which were presented to the Corps Législatif. Madame Bacciochi, who had a very decided liking for M. de Fontanes, spoke of him so often to her brother at that time, that her influence, added to Bonaparte's own high opinion of the Academician, determined him to make M. de Fontanes President of the Corps Législatif. This selection appeared strange to some people; but a man of letters would do as well as any other President for what Bonaparte intended the Corps Législatif to be henceforth. M. de Fontanes had to deliver harangues to the Emperor under most difficult circumstances, and he always acquitted himself with grace and distinction. He had little strength of character, but his ability told when he had to speak in public; and his good taste lent him dignity and impressiveness. Perhaps

that was no advantage to Bonaparte. Nothing is so dangerous for sovereigns as to have their abuses of power clothed in the glowing colours of eloquence, when they figure before nations; and this is especially dangerous in France, where externals are held in such esteem. How often have the Parisians, although in the secret of the farce the Government was acting, lent themselves to the deception with a good grace, simply because the actors did homage to their delicacy of taste, which demands that each shall do his best with the *rôle* assigned to him?

In the course of the month of January, the *Moniteur* published a selection of articles from the English journals, in which the differences between Bavaria and Austria, and the probabilities of a continental war, were discussed. Paragraphs of this kind were from time to time inserted in the newspapers, without any comment, as if to prepare us for what might happen. These intimations were like the clouds over mountain summits, which fall apart for a moment now and then, and afford a glimpse of what is passing behind; they allowed us to have momentary peeps at the important discussions which were taking place in Europe, so that we should not be much surprised when the result proved to be a rupture. After each glimpse the clouds would close again, and we would remain in darkness until the storm burst.

I am about to speak of an important epoch, concerning which my memory is full and faithful. It is that of the conspiracy of Georges Cadoudal, and the crime to which it led. Respecting General Moreau, I shall repeat what I have heard said, but shall be careful to affirm nothing. I think it well to preface this narrative by a brief explanation of the state of affairs at that time. Certain persons, somewhat closely connected with politics, were beginning to assert that France felt the necessity of hereditary right in the governing power. Political courtiers, and honest, sincere revolutionists, seeing that the tranquillity of the country depended on one life, were discussing the instability of the Consulate. By degrees the thoughts of all were once more turned to monarchy, and this would have had its advantages, if they could have agreed to establish a monarchy tempered by the laws. Revolutions have this great disadvantage, that they divide public opinion into an infinite number of varieties, which are all modified by circumstances. Thus arises the opportunity of despotism after revolutions. To restrain the power of Bonaparte, it would have been necessary to venture on uttering the word "Liberty;" but as, only a few years before, that word had been used from one end of France to the other as a disguise for the worst kind of slavery, it inspired an unreasonable but fatal repugnance.

The Royalists, finding that day by day Bonaparte was departing more widely from the path they had expected he would take, were greatly disturbed. The Jacobins, whose opposition the First Consul feared much more, were secretly preparing for action, for they perceived that it was to their antagonists the Government was giving guarantees. The Concordat, the advances made to the old nobility, the destruction of revolutionary equality, all these things constituted an encroachment upon them. How happy would France have been had Bonaparte contended only against the factions! But to have done that, he must have been animated solely by the love of justice, and guided by the counsels of a generous mind.

When a sovereign, no matter what his title may be, sides with one or other of the violent parties which stir up civil strife, it is certain that he has hostile intentions against the rights of the citizens who have confided those rights to his keeping. Bonaparte, in order to fix his despotic yoke upon France, found himself obliged to come to terms with the Jacobins, and, unfortunately, there are persons whom no guarantee but that of crime will satisfy. Their ally must involve himself in some of their iniquities. This motive had a great deal to do with the death of the Duc d'Enghien, and I am convinced that all which happened at that time was the result of no

violent feeling, of no blind revenge, but simply of a Machiavelian policy, resolved to smooth its own path at any cost. Neither was it for the gratification of vanity that Bonaparte wanted to change his title of Consul for that of Emperor. We must not believe that he was always ruled by insatiable passions; no, he was capable of controlling them by calculation, and if in the end he allowed himself to be led away, it was because he became intoxicated by success and flattery. The comedy of republican equality, which he was obliged to play so long as he remained Consul, annoyed him, and in reality only deceived those who were willing to be deceived. It resembled the political pretences of ancient Rome, when the Emperors from time to time had themselves re-elected by the Senate. I have heard persons, who, having put on the love of liberty like a garment, and yet paid assiduous court to Bonaparte whilst he was First Consul, declare they entirely withdrew their esteem from him so soon as he conferred the title of Emperor upon himself. I never could understand their argument. How was it possible that the authority which he exercised almost from the moment of his entrance into the government did not enlighten them as to his actual position? Might it not rather be said, that he gave a proof of sincerity in his assumption of a title whose real powers he was exercising?

At the epoch of which I am treating, it became necessary that the First Consul should strengthen his position by some new measure. The English, who had been threatened, were secretly exciting disturbances to act as diversions from the projects formed against themselves; their relations with the Chouans were resumed; and the Royalists regarded the Consular Government as a mere transition state from the Directory to the Monarchy. One man only stood in the way; it became easy to conclude that he must be got rid of.

I remember to have heard Bonaparte say in the summer of that year (1804) that for once events had hurried him, and that he had not intended to establish royalty until two years later. He had placed the police in the hands of the Minister of Justice. This was a sound and moral proceeding, but it was contradicted by his intention that the magistracy should use that police as it had been used when it was a revolutionary institution. I have already said that Bonaparte's first ideas were generally good and great. To conceive and carry them out was to exercise his power; but to submit to them afterwards savoured of abdication. He was unable to endure the dominion of even one of his own institutions. Restrained by the slow and regular forms of justice, and also by the feebleness and mediocrity of his Chief Judge, he surrounded himself with in-

numerable police agents, and by degrees regained confidence in Fouché, who was an adept in the art of making himself necessary. Fouché, a man of keen and far-seeing intellect, a Jacobin grown rich, and consequently disgusted with some of the principles of that party—with which, however, he still remained connected, so that he might be secure should trouble arise—had no objection to invest Bonaparte with royalty. His natural flexibility made him always ready to accept any form of government in which he saw a post for himself. His habits were more revolutionary than his principles; and the only state of things, I believe, which he could not have endured, would be one which should make an absolute nonentity of him. To make use of him one should have thoroughly understood his disposition, and been very cautious in dealing with him, remembering that he needed troublous times for the full display of his capacity; for, as he had no passions and no aversions, he rose at such times superior to the generality of those about him, who were all more or less actuated by either fear or resentment.

Fouché has denied that he advised the murder of the Duc d'Enghien. Unless there be complete certainty of the fact, I see no reason for bringing the accusation of a crime against a man who positively denies it. Besides, Fouché, who was very far-sighted, must have foreseen that such a deed would

give only a temporary guarantee to the party which Bonaparte wanted to win. He knew the First Consul too well to fear that he would think of replacing the King on a throne which he might occupy himself, and there is little doubt that, with the information he possessed, he would have pronounced the murder of the Duc d'Enghien to be a mistake.

M. de Talleyrand's own plans were also served by his advice that Bonaparte should invest himself with royalty. That proceeding would suit M. de Talleyrand to a nicety. His enemies, and even Bonaparte himself, have accused him of having advised the murder of the unhappy prince. But Bonaparte and his enemies are not credible on this point; the well-known character of M. de Talleyrand is against the truth of the statement. He has said to me more than once that Bonaparte informed him and the two Consuls of the arrest of the Duc d'Enghien, and of his own unalterable determination at the same time. He added that they all three knew remonstrance was vain, and therefore kept silence. That was indeed a deplorable weakness, but one very common to M. de Talleyrand, who would not think of remonstrating for the sake of conscience only, when he knew that a line of action had been decided upon. Opposition and bold resistance may take effect upon any nature, however resolute. A sovereign of a cruel and sanguinary disposition will sometimes sacrifice

his inclination to the force of reason arrayed against it. Bonaparte was not cruel either by inclination or on system; he merely wanted to carry his point by the quickest and surest method. He has himself said that at that time he was obliged to get rid of both Jacobins and Royalists. The imprudence of the latter furnished him with this fatal opportunity. He seized it; and what I shall hereafter have to relate will show that it was with the coolest of calculation, or rather of sophistry, that he shed illustrious and innocent blood.

A few days after the first return of the King, the Duc de Rovigo presented himself at my house one morning.* He tried to clear himself from the accusations that were brought against him. He spoke to me of the death of the Duc d'Enghien. "The Emperor and I," he said, "were deceived on that occasion. One of the inferior agents in Georges Cadoudal's conspiracy had been suborned by my police. He came to us, and stated that one night, when all the conspirators were assembled, the secret arrival of an important chief who could not yet be named, had been announced to them. A few nights later, a person appeared among them, to whom the others paid great respect. The spy de-

* The Duc de Rovigo knew how intimate my husband and I were with M. de Talleyrand, and he was anxious to induce us to further his interests with that personage.

scribed the unknown so as to give us the impression that he was a prince of the House of Bourbon. About the same time the Duc d'Enghein had established himself at Ettenheim, with the intention, no doubt, of awaiting the result of the conspiracy. The police agents wrote that he sometimes disappeared for several days together. We concluded that at these times he came to Paris, and his arrest was resolved upon. Since then, when the spy was confronted with the persons who had been arrested, he recognized Pichegru as the important personage of whom he had spoken; and when I told this to Bonaparte, he exclaimed, with a stamp of his foot, 'Ah, the wretch! what has he made me do?'"

To return to the facts. Pichegru arrived in France on the 15th of January, 1804, and from the 25th of January was concealed in Paris. It was known that, in the year 5 of the Republic, General Moreau had denounced him to the Government for keeping up relations with the House of Bourbon. Moreau was supposed to hold Republican opinions; but he had probably then exchanged them for the idea of a constitutional monarchy. I do not know whether his family would defend him now as earnestly as they did then from the accusation of having aided the plans of the Royalists, nor do I know whether implicit confidence is to be placed on confessions made in the reign of Louis XVIII. The

conduct of Moreau in 1813, and the honour paid to his memory by our princes, might, however, fairly lead us to believe that they had reason to count on him beforehand. At the period of which I am now speaking, Moreau was deeply irritated against Bonaparte. It has never been doubted that he visited Pichegru in secret; he certainly kept silence about the conspiracy. Some of the Royalists who were arrested at this time declared that he had merely displayed that prudent hesitation which waits for the success of a party to declare itself. Moreau, it was said, was a feeble and insignificant man, except on the field of battle, and overweighted by his reputation. "There are persons," said Bonaparte, "who do not know how to wear their fame. The part of Monk suited Moreau perfectly. In his place I should have acted as he did, only more cleverly."

It is not, however, in order to justify Bonaparte that I mention my doubts. Whatever was Moreau's character, his fame was genuine; it ought to have been respected, and an old comrade in arms, grown discontented and embittered, ought to have been excused. A reconciliation with him, even if it had been merely a result of that political calculation which Bonaparte discerned in Corneille's Augustus, would still have been the wisest proceeding. But I do not doubt that Bonaparte was sincerely convinced

of what he called Moreau's *moral treason*, and he held that to be sufficient for the law and for justice, because he always refused to look at the true aspect of anything which was displeasing to himself. He was assured that proofs to justify the condemnation of Moreau were not wanting. He found himself committed to a line of action, and he afterwards refused to recognize anything but party spirit in the equity of the tribunals; and, besides, he knew the most injurious thing which could happen to him would be that this interesting prisoner should be declared innocent. When he found himself on the point of being compromised, he would stop at nothing. From this cause arose the deplorable incidents of the famous trial. The conspiracy had been a subject of conversation for several days. On the 17th of February, 1804, I went to the Tuileries in the morning. The Consul was in the room with his wife; I was announced and shown in. Madame Bonaparte was in great distress; her eyes were red with crying. Bonaparte was sitting near the fireplace, with little Napoleon * on his knees. He looked grave, but not agitated, and was playing mechanically with the child.

"Do you know what I have done?" said he. I

* The eldest child of Madame Louis Bonaparte, afterwards Queen Hortense. He was born on the 10th of October, 1802, and died of croup on the 5th of May, 1807.—P. R.

answered in the negative. "I have just given an order for Moreau's arrest." I could not repress a start. "Ah, you are astonished," said he. "There will be a great fuss about this, will there not? Of course, it will be said that I am jealous of Moreau, that this is revenge, and other petty nonsense of the same kind. I jealous of Moreau! Why, he owes the best part of his reputation to me. It was I who left a fine army with him, and kept only recruits with myself in Italy. I wanted nothing more than to get on well with him. I certainly was not afraid of him; I am not afraid of anybody, and less of Moreau than of other people. I have hindered him from committing himself twenty times over. I warned him that there would be mischief made between us; he knew that as well as I did. But he is weak and conceited; he allows women to lead him, and the various parties have urged him."

While he was speaking Bonaparte rose, approached his wife, and taking her by the chin, made her hold up her head. "Ha!" he said, "every one has not got a good wife, like me. You are crying, Josephine. What for, eh? Are you frightened?" "No; but I don't like to think of what will be said." "What! How can that be helped?" Then, turning to me, he added, "I am not actuated by any enmity or any desire of vengeance; I have reflected deeply before arresting Moreau. I might have shut

my eyes, and given him time to fly, but it would have been said that I did not dare to bring him to trial. I have the means of convicting him. He is guilty, I am the Government; the whole thing is quite simple."

I cannot tell whether the power of my old recollections is still upon me, but I confess that even at this moment I can hardly believe that when Bonaparte spoke thus he was not sincere. I have seen each stage of his progress in the art of dissimulation, and I know that at that particular epoch he still retained certain accents of truthfulness, which afterwards were no longer to be detected in his voice. Perhaps, however, it was only because I still believed in him.

With the above words he left us, and Madame Bonaparte told me that he remained up almost the whole of the night, debating whether or not he should have Moreau arrested, weighing the *pros* and *cons* of the measure, without any symptom of personal feeling in the matter; that then, towards daybreak, he sent for General Berthier, and after a long interview with him he determined on sending to Grosbois, whither Moreau had retired.

This event gave rise to a great deal of discussion, and opinion was much divided. General Moreau's brother, a tribune, spoke with great vehemence at the Tribunate, and produced considerable effect.

A deputation was sent up by the three representative bodies with an address of congratulation to the First Consul. In Paris, all who represented the Liberal portion of the population, a section of the *bourgeoisie*, lawyers, and men of letters, were warmly in favour of Moreau. It was, of course, plain enough that political opposition formed an element in the interest exhibited on his behalf; his partisans agreed that they would throng the court at which he was to be brought up, and there was even a threatening whisper about what should be done if he were condemned. Bonaparte's police informed him that there was a plot to break into Moreau's prison. This irritated him, and his temper began to give way. Murat, his brother-in-law, who was then Governor of Paris, hated Moreau, and took care to add to Bonaparte's exasperation by his daily reports to him; he and Dubois, the Prefect of Police, combining together to pursue him with alarming rumours. Events, unhappily, came to the aid of their design. Each day a fresh ramification of the conspiracy was discovered, and each day Parisian society refused more obstinately than on the preceding to believe that there was any conspiracy at all. A war of opinion was being waged between Bonaparte and the Parisians.

On the 29th of February, Pichegru's hiding-place

was discovered, and he was arrested, after a gallant struggle with the gendarmes. This event somewhat shook the general incredulity, but public interest still centred in Moreau. His wife's grief assumed a rather theatrical aspect, and this also had its effect. In the mean time Bonaparte, who was ignorant of the formalities of law, found them much more tedious than he had expected. At the commencement of the affair, the Chief Judge had too readily undertaken to simplify and shorten the procedure, and now only one charge was distinctly made: that Moreau had held secret conference with Pichegru, and had received his confidence, but without pledging himself positively to anything. This was not sufficient to secure a condemnation which was becoming a necessity; in short, notwithstanding that great name which is mixed up in the affair, Georges Cadoudal has always been believed to have been, as he appeared at the trial, the real leader of the conspiracy.

It would be impossible to describe the excitement that pervaded the palace. Everybody was consulted; the most trifling conversations were repeated. One day Savary took M. de Rémusat aside, and said, "You have been a magistrate, you know the laws; do you think the details we are in possession of are sufficient for the information of the judges?" "No man," replied my husband, "has ever

been condemned merely because he did not reveal projects with which he was made acquainted. No doubt, that is a political wrong towards the Government, but it is not a crime which ought to involve the penalty of death; and if that is your sole plea, you will only have furnished Moreau with evidence damaging to yourselves." "In that case," said Savary, "the Chief Judge has led us into making a great blunder. It would have been better to have had a military commission."

From the day of Pichegru's arrest, the gates of Paris were shut, while search was made for Georges Cadoudal, but he eluded pursuit with extraordinary success. Fouché, who laid the foundations of his new reputation on this occasion, mercilessly ridiculed the unskilfulness of the police, and his comments enraged Bonaparte, who was already angry enough, so that, when he had incurred a real danger, and saw that the Parisians were disinclined to believe the statement of the facts, he began to wish for revenge. "Judge," said he, "whether the French can ever be governed by legal and moderate institutions? I have put down a revolutionary but useful department of the Ministry, and conspiracies are immediately formed. I have foregone my own personal feelings; I have handed over the punishment of a man who intended to kill me to an authority independent of myself; and, far from giving me any

thanks for all this, people laugh at my moderation, and assign corrupt motives for my conduct. I will teach them to belie my intentions. I will lay hold of all my powers again, and prove to them that I alone am made to govern, to decide, and to punish."

Bonaparte grew more and more angry as he became aware, from moment to moment, that something was amiss with himself. He had thought to rule public opinion, but here was public opinion escaping from his hold. He had been ruled by it himself in the outset of his career, I am certain, and he had gained no credit by that; so he resolved never again to make a similar mistake. It will seem strange to those who do not know how utterly the wearing of a uniform destroys the habit of thinking, that not the slightest uneasiness was felt on this occasion with respect to the army. Military men do everything by word of command, and they abstain from opinions which are not prescribed to them. Very few officers remembered that they had once fought and conquered under Moreau, and the *bourgeoisie* was much more excited about the affair than any other class.

The Polignacs, M. de Rivière, and some others were arrested. Then the public began to think there really was some truth in the story of the conspiracy, and that the plot was a Royalist one. Nevertheless,

the Republican party still demanded Moreau. The nobility were alarmed, and kept very quiet; they condemned the imprudence of the Polignacs, who have since acknowledged that they were not seconded with so much zeal as they had been led to expect. The error into which they fell, and to which the Royalist party was always prone, was that they believed in the existence of what they desired, and acted upon their illusions. This is a mistake common to men who are led by their passions or by their vanity.

I suffered a great deal at this time. At the Tuileries, the First Consul was moody and silent, his wife was frequently in tears, his family were angry; his sister exasperated him by her violent way of talking. In society opinions were divided: on the one hand were distrust, suspicion, indignation, mingled with satisfaction; on the other, regret that the attempt had failed, and passionate condemnation. All these contentions distracted and upset me. I shut myself up with my mother and my husband; we questioned one another about all that we heard, and everything that we respectively thought. M. de Rémusat's steady rectitude of mind was grieved by the grave errors which he recognised, and as his judgment was uninfluenced by passion, he began to dread the future, and imparted to me his sagacious and melancholy prevision of a character which he studied.

closely and silently. His apprehensions distressed me; the doubts which were springing up in my own mind rendered me very unhappy. Alas! the moment was drawing near when I was to be far more painfully enlightened.

CHAPTER V.

The arrest of Georges Cadoudal—The mission of M. de Caulaincourt to Ettenheim—The arrest of the Duc d'Enghien—My distress and my urgency with Madame Bonaparte—An evening at Malmaison—The death of the Duc d'Enghien—Remarkable words of the First Consul.

AFTER the arrests which I have already recorded, there appeared in the *Moniteur* certain articles from the *Morning Chronicle*, in which it was stated that the death of Bonaparte and the restoration of Louis XVIII. were imminent. It was added that persons newly arrived from London affirmed that speculation upon these eventualities was rife on the Stock Exchange, and that Georges Cadoudal, Pichegru, and Moreau were named openly there. In the same *Moniteur* appeared a letter from an Englishman to Bonaparte, whom he addressed as "Monsieur Consul." The purport of this letter was to recommend, as specially applicable to Bonaparte, a pamphlet written in Cromwell's time, which tended to prove that persons such as Cromwell and himself could not be assassinated, because there was no crime

in killing a dangerous animal or a tyrant. "To kill is not to assassinate in such cases," said the pamphlet; "the difference is great."

In France, however, addresses from all the towns and from all the regiments, and pastorals by all the Bishops, complimenting the First Consul and congratulating France on the danger which had been escaped, were forwarded to Paris, and these documents were punctually inserted in the *Moniteur*.

At length, on the 29th of March, Georges Cadoudal was arrested in the Place de l'Odéon. He was in a cabriolet, and perceiving that he was followed, he urged on his horse. A gendarme bravely caught the animal by the head, and was shot dead by Cadoudal; the cabriolet was, however, stopped, owing to the crowd which instantly collected at the report of the pistol, and Cadoudal was arrested. Between sixty and eighty thousand francs in notes were found on him, and given to the widow of the man whom he had killed. The newspapers stated that he acknowledged he had come to France for no other purpose than to assassinate Bonaparte; but I remember to have heard at the time that the prisoner, whose courage and firmness during the whole of the proceedings were unshaken, and who evinced great devotion to the House of Bourbon, steadily denied that there had ever been any purpose of assassination, while admitting that his intention

had been to attack the carriage of the First Consul, and to carry him off without harming him.

At this time, the King of England (George III.) was taken seriously ill, and our Government reckoned upon his death to ensure the retirement of Mr. Pitt from the Ministry.

On the 21st of March the following appeared in the *Moniteur*:—"Prince de Condé has addressed a circular to the *émigrés*, with a view to collecting them on the Rhine. A prince of the House of Bourbon is now on the frontier for that purpose."

Immediately afterwards, the secret correspondence that had been taken from Mr. Drake, the accredited English Minister in Bavaria, was published. These documents proved that the English Government was leaving no means untried of creating disturbance in France. M. de Talleyrand was directed to send copies of the correspondence to all the members of the Corps Diplomatique, and they expressed their indignation in letters which were inserted in the *Moniteur*.

Holy Week was approaching. On Passion Sunday, the 18th of March, my week of attendance on Madame Bonaparte began. I went to the Tuileries in the morning, in time for Mass, which was again celebrated with all the former pomp. After Mass, Madame Bonaparte received company in the great drawing-room, and remained for some time, talking to several persons. When we went down to her

private apartments, she informed me that we were to pass that week at Malmaison. "I am very glad," she added; "Paris frightens me just now." Shortly afterwards, we set out; Bonaparte was in his own carriage, Madame Bonaparte and myself were in hers. I observed that she was silent and sad for a part of the way, and I let her see that I was uneasy about her. At first she seemed reluctant to give me any explanation, but at length she said, "I am going to trust you with a great secret. This morning Bonaparte told me that he had sent M. de Caulaincourt to the frontier to seize the Duc d'Enghien. He is to be brought back here." "Ah, Madame," I exclaimed, "what are they going to do with him?" "I believe," she answered, "he will have him tried." I do not think I have ever in my life experienced such a thrill of terror as that which her words sent through me. Madame Bonaparte thought I was going to faint, and let down all the glasses. "I have done what I could," she went on, "to induce him to promise me that the prince's life shall not be taken, but I am greatly afraid his mind is made up." "What, do you really think he will have him put to death?" "I fear so." At these words I burst into tears, and then, so soon as I could master my emotion sufficiently to be able to speak, I urged upon her the fatal consequences of such a deed, the indelible stain of such vain

bloodshed, which would satisfy the Jacobin party only, the strong interest with which the prince inspired all the other parties, the great name of Condé, the general horror, the bitter animosity which would be aroused, and many other considerations. I argued every side of the question, of which Madame Bonaparte contemplated one only. The idea of a murder was that which had struck her most strongly; but I succeeded in seriously alarming her, and she promised me that she would endeavour by every means in her power to induce Bonaparte to relinquish his fatal purpose.

We both arrived at Malmaison in the deepest dejection. I took refuge at once in my own room, where I wept bitterly. I was completely overwhelmed by this terrible discovery. I liked and admired Bonaparte; I believed him to be called by an invincible power to the highest of human destinies; I allowed my youthful imagination to run riot concerning him. All in a moment, the veil which hid the truth from my eyes was torn away, and by my own feelings at that instant I could only too accurately divine what would be the general opinion of such an act.

There was no one at Malmaison to whom I could speak freely. My husband was not in waiting, and had remained in Paris. I was obliged to control my agitation, and to make my appearance with an

unmoved countenance, for Madame Bonaparte had earnestly entreated me not to let Bonaparte divine that she had spoken to me of this matter.

On going down to the drawing-room at six o'clock, I found the First Consul playing a game of chess. He appeared quite serene and calm; it made me ill to look at his face. So completely had my mind been upset by all that had passed through it during the last two hours, that I could not regard him with the feelings which his presence usually inspired; it seemed to me that I must see some extraordinary alteration in him. A few officers dined with him. Nothing whatever of any significance occurred; after dinner he withdrew to his cabinet, where he transacted business with his police. That night, when I was leaving Madame Bonaparte, she again promised me that she would renew her entreaties.

I joined her as early as I could on the following morning, and found her quite in despair. Bonaparte had repelled her at every point. He had told her that women had no concern with such matters; that his policy required this *coup d'état*; that by it he should acquire the right to exercise clemency hereafter; that, in fact, he was forced to choose between a decisive act and a long series of conspiracies which he would have to punish in detail, as impunity would have encouraged the various parties. He should have to go on prosecuting, exiling,

condemning, without end; to revoke his measures of mercy towards the *émigrés;* to place himself in the hands of the Jacobins. The Royalists had more than once compromised him with the revolutionists. The contemplated action would set him free from all parties alike. Besides, after all, the Duc d'Enghien had joined in the conspiracy of Georges Cadoudal; he was a cause of disturbance to France, and a tool in the hands of England for effecting her purposes of vengeance; the prince's military reputation might in the future prove a source of trouble in the army; whereas by his death the last link between our soldiers and the Bourbons would be broken. In politics, a death which tranquillizes a nation is not a crime. Finally, he had given his orders—he would not withdraw them; there was an end of the matter.

During their interview, Madame Bonaparte informed her husband that he was about to aggravate the heinousness of the deed by the selection of M. de Caulaincourt, whose parents had formerly been in the household of the Prince de Condé, as the person who was to arrest the Duc d'Enghien. "I did not know that," replied Bonaparte; "but what does it matter? If Caulaincourt is compromised, there is no great harm in that; indeed, it will only make him serve me all the better, and the opposite party will henceforth forgive him for being a gentle-

man." He then added that M. de Caulaincourt, who had been informed of only a portion of his plan, believed that the Duc d'Enghien was to be imprisoned in France.

My heart failed me at these words. M. de Caulaincourt was a friend of mine. It seemed to me that he ought to have refused to undertake such a task.

The day passed drearily. I remember that Madame Bonaparte, who was very fond of trees and flowers, was busy during the morning, superintending the transplanting of a cypress to a newly laid-out portion of her garden. She threw a few handfuls of earth on the roots of the tree, so that she might say she had planted it with her own hands. "Ah, madame," said I to her, as I observed her doing so, "a cypress is just the tree that suits such a day as this." I have never passed by that cypress since without a thrill of pain.

My profound emotion distressed Madame Bonaparte. She had great faith in all Bonaparte's views, and, owing to her natural levity and fickleness, she excessively disliked painful or lasting impressions. Her feelings were quick, but extraordinarily evanescent. Being convinced that the death of the Duc d'Enghien was inevitable, she wanted to get rid of an unavailing regret; but I would not allow her to do so. I importuned her all day long, without

ceasing. She listened to me with extreme gentleness and kindness, but in utter dejection; she knew Bonaparte better than I. I wept while talking to her; I implored her not to allow herself to be put down, and, as I was not without influence over her, I succeeded in inducing her to make a last attempt.

"Mention me to the First Consul, if necessary," said I. "I am of very little importance, but at least he will be able to judge, by the effect upon me, of the impression he is about to make, and I am more attached to him than other people are. I, who would ask nothing better than to find excuses for him, cannot see even one for what he intends to do."

We saw very little of Bonaparte during the whole of that second day. The Chief Judge, the Prefect of Police, and Murat, all came to Malmaison, and had prolonged audience of the First Consul; I augured ill from their countenances. I remained up a great part of the night, and when at length I fell asleep, my dreams were frightful. I fancied that I heard constant movements in the château, and that a fresh attempt was about to be made upon our lives. I was possessed with a strong desire to go and throw myself at Bonaparte's feet, and implore him to take pity upon his own fame, which I then believed to be very pure and bright, and I grieved heartily over the tarnishing of it. The hours of that night can never be effaced from my memory.

On the Tuesday morning, Madame Bonaparte said to me, "All is useless; the Duc d'Enghien arrives this evening. He will be taken to Vincennes and tried to-night. Murat has undertaken the whole. He is odious in this matter; it is he who is urging Bonaparte on, by telling him that his clemency will be taken for weakness, that the Jacobins will be furious, and one party is now displeased because the former fame of Moreau has not been taken into consideration, and will ask why a Bourbon should be differently treated. Bonaparte has forbidden me to speak to him again on the subject. He asked me about you," she added, "and I acknowledged that I had told you everything. He had perceived your distress. Pray try to control yourself."

At this I lost all self-restraint, and exclaimed, "Let him think what he likes of me. It matters very little to me, madame, I assure you; and if he asks me why I am weeping, I will tell him that I weep for him." And, in fact, I again burst into tears.

Madame Bonaparte was thrown into consternation by the state I was in—she was almost incapable of any strong mental emotion—and when she tried to calm me by reassuring words I could only say to her, "Ah, madame, you do not understand me!" After this event, she said, Bonaparte would go on just as he had done before. Alas!

it was not the future which was troubling me. I did not doubt his power over himself and others; the anguish that filled my whole being was interior and personal.

Dinner-hour came, and she had to go down with a composed face. Mine was quite beyond my control. Again Bonaparte was playing chess: he had taken a fancy to that game. Immediately on perceiving me he called me to him, saying that he wanted to consult me. I was not able to speak. He addressed me in a tone of kindness and interest, which increased my confusion and distress. When dinner was served, he placed me near himself, and asked me a number of questions about the affairs of my family. He seemed bent on bewildering me, and hindering me from thinking. Little Napoleon (the son of Louis and Hortense) had been brought down from Paris; and his uncle placed the child in the middle of the table, and seemed much amused when he pulled the dishes about, and upset everything within his reach.

After dinner, he sat on the floor, playing with the boy, and apparently in very high spirits, which it seemed to me were assumed. Madame Bonaparte, who had feared that he would be angry at what she had told him about me, looked from one to the other of us, smiling sweetly, as if she would have said,

"You see, he is not so bad after all; we may make our minds easy."

I hardly knew where I was. I felt as though I were dreaming a bad dream; no doubt I looked bewildered. Suddenly, fixing a piercing gaze upon me, Bonaparte said, "Why have you no rouge on? You are too pale." I answered that I had forgotten to put on any. "What!" said he, "a woman forget to put on her rouge?" And then, with a loud laugh, he turned to his wife, and added, "That would never happen to you, Josephine." I was greatly disconcerted, and he completed my discomfiture by remarking, "Two things are very becoming to women—rouge and tears."

When General Bonaparte was in high spirits, he was equally devoid of taste and moderation, and on such occasions his manners smacked of the barrack-room. He went on for some time jesting with his wife with more freedom than delicacy, and then challenged me to a game of chess. He did not play well, and never would observe the correct moves. I allowed him to do as he liked; every one in the room kept silence. Presently he began to mutter some lines of poetry, and then repeated, a little louder, "Soyons ami, Cinna," and Guzman's lines in Act v. scene vii. of *Alzire*:—

"Des dieux que nous servons connais la différence:
Les tiens t'ont commandé le meurtre et la vengeance:

Et le mien, quand ton bras vient de m'assassiner,
M'ordonne de te plaindre et de te pardonner."

As he half-whispered the line—

"Et le mien, quand ton bras vient de m'assassiner,"

I could not refrain from raising my eyes and looking at him. He smiled, and went on repeating the verses. In truth, at that moment I did believe that he had deceived his wife and everybody else, and was planning a grand scene of magnanimous pardon. I caught eagerly at this idea, and it restored me to composure. My imagination was very juvenile in those days, and I wanted so much to be able to hope!

"You like poetry?" Bonaparte asked me. How I longed to answer, "Especially when the lines are applicable;" but I did not dare to utter the words. I may as well mention in this place that the very day after I had set down the above reminiscence, a friend lent me a book entitled "Mémoires Secrétes sur la Vie de Lucien Bonaparte." This work, which is probably written by a secretary of Lucien's, is inaccurate in several instances. Some notes added at the end, are said to be written by a person worthy of belief. I found among them the following, which struck me as curious:—"Lucien was informed of the death of the Duc d'Enghien by General Hullin, a relative of Madame Jouberthon, who came to her house some hours after that event, looking the image of grief and consternation. The

Military Council had been assured that the First Consul only purposed to assert his authority, but fully intended to pardon the prince, and certain lines from *Alzire*, commencing—

'Des dieux que nous servons connais la différence,'

were quoted to them."

But to resume. We went on with our game, and his gaiety gave me more and more confidence. We were still playing, when the sound of carriage-wheels was heard, and presently General Hullin was announced. Bonaparte pushed away the chess-table roughly, rose, and went into the adjoining gallery. There he remained all the rest of the evening, with Murat, Hullin, and Savary. We saw no more of him, and yet I went to my room feeling more easy. I could not believe but that Bonaparte must be moved by the fact of having such a victim in his hands. I hoped the prince would ask to see him; and in fact he did so, adding, "If the First Consul would consent to see me, he would do me justice, for he would know that I have done my duty." My idea was that Bonaparte would go to Vincennes, and publicly grant the prince pardon in person. If he were not going to act thus, why should he have quoted those lines from *Alzire?*

That night, that terrible night, passed. Early in the morning I went down to the drawing-room, and

there I found Savary. He was deadly pale, and I must do him the justice to say that his face betrayed great agitation. He spoke to me with trembling lips, but his words were quite insignificant. I did not question him; for persons of his kind will always say what they want to say without being asked, although they never give answers.

Madame Bonaparte came in, looked at me very sadly, and, as she took her seat, said to Savary, "Well—so it is done?" "Yes, Madame," he answered. "He died this morning, and, I am bound to acknowledge, with great courage." I was struck dumb with horror.

Madame Bonaparte asked for details. They have all been made known since. The prince was taken to one of the trenches of the château. Being offered a handkerchief to bind his eyes, he rejected it with dignity; and, addressing the gendarmes, said, "You are Frenchmen: at least you will do me the service not to miss your aim." He placed in Savary's hands a ring, a lock of hair, and a letter for Madame de Rohan; and all these Savary showed to Madame Bonaparte. The letter was open; it was brief and tender. I do not know whether these last wishes of the unfortunate prince were carried out.

"After his death," said Savary, "the gendarmes were told that they might take his clothes, his watch, and the money he had in his pocket; but not

one of them would touch anything. People may say what they like, but one cannot see a man like that die, as coolly as one can see others. I feel it hard to get over it."

Presently Eugène de Beauharnais made his appearance. He was too young to have recollections of the past, and in his eyes the Duc d'Enghien was simply a conspirator against the life of his master. Then came certain generals, whose names I will not set down here; and they applauded the deed so loudly that Madame Bonaparte thought it necessary to apologize for her own dejection, by repeating over and over again the unmeaning sentence, "I am a woman, you know, and I confess I could cry."

In the course of the morning a number of visitors came to the Tuileries. Among them were the Consuls, the Ministers, and Louis Bonaparte and his wife. Louis preserved a sullen silence, which seemed to imply disapprobation. Madame Louis was so frightened that she did not dare to feel, and seemed to be asking what she ought to think. Women, even more than men, were subjugated by the magic of that sacramental phrase of Bonaparte's—"My policy." With those words he crushed one's thoughts, feelings, and even impressions; and when he uttered them, no one in the palace, especially no woman, would have dared to ask him what he meant.

My husband also came during the morning, and his presence relieved me from the terrible oppression from which I was suffering. He, like myself, was grieved and downcast. How grateful I was to him for not lecturing me upon the absolute necessity of our appearing perfectly composed under the circumstances! We sympathized in every feeling. He told me that the general sentiment in Paris was one of disgust, and that the heads of the Jacobin party said, "He belongs to us now." He added the following words, which I have frequently recalled to mind since:—"The Consul has taken a line which will force him into laying aside the useful, in order to efface this recollection, and into dazzling us by the extraordinary and the unexpected." He also said to Madame Bonaparte, "There is one important piece of advice which you ought to give the First Consul. It is that he should not lose a moment in restoring public confidence. Opinion is apt to be precipitate in Paris. He ought at least to prove to the people that the event which has just occurred is not due to the development of a cruel disposition, but to reasons whose force I am not called upon to determine, and which ought to make him very circumspect."

Madame Bonaparte fully appreciated the advice of M. de Rémusat, and immediately repeated his words to her husband. He seemed well disposed to listen

to her, and answered briefly, "That is quite true." On rejoining Madame Bonaparte before dinner, I found her in the gallery, with her daughter and M. de Caulaincourt, who had just arrived. He had superintended the arrest of the Duc d'Enghien, but had not accompanied him to Paris. I recoiled at the sight of him. "And you, too," said he, addressing me, so that all could hear him, "you are going to detest me! And yet I am only unfortunate; but that I am in no small degree, for the Consul has disgraced me by this act. Such is the reward of my devotion to him. I have been shamefully deceived, and I am now ruined." He shed tears while speaking, and I could not but pity him.

Madame Bonaparte assured me afterwards that he had spoken in the same way to the First Consul, and I was myself a witness to his severe and angry bearing towards Bonaparte, who made many advances to him, but for a long time in vain. The First Consul laid out his plans before him, but found him cold and uninterested; then he made him brilliant offers, by way of amends, which were at first rejected. Perhaps they ought to have been always refused.

In the mean time public opinion declared itself strongly against M. de Caulaincourt. Certain persons condemned the aide-de-camp mercilessly, while they made excuses for the master; and such

injustice exasperated M. de Caulaincourt, who might have bowed his head before frank and candid censure, fairly distributed between them. When, however, he saw that every sort of affront was to be heaped on him, in order that the real culprit might go quite free, he conceived an utter disdain for these people, and consented to force them into silence by placing himself in a position of such authority as would enable him to overrule them. He was urged to take this course by Bonaparte and also by his own ambition. "Do not act like a fool," said the former. "If you retreat before all this abuse you will be done for; no one will give you any thanks or credit for your tardy opposition to my wishes, and you will be all the more heavily censured because you are not formidable." By dint of similar reasoning frequently reiterated, and by the employment of every sort of device for consoling and coaxing M. de Caulaincourt, Bonaparte succeeded in appeasing his resentment, and by degrees he raised him to posts of great dignity about his own person. The weakness that induced M. de Caulaincourt to pardon the indelible injury which the First Consul had done him, may be more or less blamed; but, at least, it should be admitted that he was never a blind or servile courtier, and that he remained to the last among the small number of Bonaparte's servants who

never neglected an opportunity of telling him the truth.*

Before dinner, both Madame Bonaparte and her daughter entreated me to command my countenance as much as possible. The former told me that her husband had asked her that morning what effect the deplorable news had produced upon me, and on her replying that I had wept, he said, "That is a matter of course; she merely did what was to be expected of her as a woman. You don't understand anything about our business; but it will all subside, and everybody will see that I have not made a blunder."

At length, dinner was announced. In addition to the household officers on duty for that week, the

* M. de Caulaincourt retained the same feelings all his life, and very severely condemned the policy and the personal character of Bonaparte, whose fatal projects he frequently endeavoured to avert. M. Mounier, the son of the celebrated member of the Assemblies of the Revolution, with whom my father was very intimate in his youth, told him that in the campaign of 1813, M. de Caulaincourt, then Duc de Vienne, while accompanying the Emperor with several members of his staff and of his household, saw a shell strike the ground close by Napoleon. He rode up, putting his horse between the Emperor and the missile, and covered him as much as possible from the fragments of the shell, which happily exploded without hitting anybody. In the evening, M. Monnier, who was supping at head-quarters, spoke to him of this deed of bravery, by which he had risked his own life to save that of his master. "That is true," replied the Duc de Vienne, "and yet I could not believe that there is a God in heaven if that man were to die on the throne."

dinner-party included M. and Mme. Louis Bonaparte, Eugène Beauharnais, M. de Caulaincourt, and General Hullin, who was then Commandant of Paris. The sight of this man affected me painfully. His expression of face, perfectly unmoved, was just the same on that day as it had been on the preceding.* I quite believe that he did not think he had done an ill deed, or that he had performed an act of zeal in presiding over the military commission which condemned the prince. Bonaparte rewarded the fatal service which he had rendered him with money and promotion, but he said more than once, when he noted Hullin's presence, "The sight of him annoys me; he reminds me of things which I do not like."

Bonaparte did not come into the drawing-room at all; he went from his cabinet to the dinner-table. He affected no high spirits that day; on the contrary, he remained during the whole time of dinner in a profound reverie. We were all very silent. Just as we were about to rise from table, the First Consul said, in a harsh, abrupt tone, as if in reply to his own thoughts, "At least they will see what we are capable of, and henceforth, I hope, they will leave us alone." He then passed on into the drawing-room, where he talked for a long time in a low voice with his wife, looking at me now and then, but without any anger in his glance. I sat apart from

* I have since been assured that he was deeply grieved.

all, downcast and ill, without either the power or the wish to utter a word.

Presently Joseph Bonaparte and M. and Mme. Bacciochi * arrived, accompanied by M. de Fontanes.† Lucien was on bad terms with his brother, who had objected to his marriage with Madame Jouberthon, and came no more to the palace; indeed, he was then making ready to leave France. During the evening, Murat, Dubois, who was Prefect of Police, the members of the Council of State, and others arrived, all with composed faces. The conversation was at first trifling and awkward; the women sitting silent, the men standing in a semicircle, Bonaparte walking about from one side of the room to the other. Presently he began a discussion, half literary, half historical, with M. de Fontanes. The mention of certain historical names gave him an opportunity of bringing out his opinion of some of our kings and great military commanders. I remarked on this evening that he dwelt on dethronements of every kind, both actual, and such as are effected by a change of public opinion. He lauded Charlemagne, but maintained that France had always been *en decadence*

* M. Bacciochi was then a colonel of dragoons, and had nothing whatever to do with politics. He had a passion for the violin, and played all day.

† M. de Fontanes was appointed President of the Corps Législatif at this time, and afterwards perpetual President.

under the Valois. He depreciated the greatness of Henry IV. "He was wanting," said he, "in gravity. Good nature is an affectation which a sovereign ought to avoid. What does he want? Is it to remind those who surround him that he is a man like any other? What nonsense! So soon as a man is a king, he is apart from all, and I have always held that there was the instinct of true policy in Alexander's idea of making himself out to be the descendant of a god." He added that Louis XIV. knew the French better than Henry IV.; but he hastened to add that Louis had allowed "priests and an old woman" to get the better of him, and he made some coarse remarks on that point. Then he held forth on Louis XIV.'s generals, and on military science in general.

"Military science," said Bonaparte, 'consists in calculating all the chances accurately in the first place, and then in giving accident exactly, almost mathematically, its place in one's calculations. It is upon this point that one must not deceive one's self, and that a decimal more or less may change all. Now, this apportioning of accident and science cannot get into any head except that of a genius, for genius must exist wherever there is a creation, and assuredly the grandest improvisation of the human mind is the gift of existence to that which has it not. Accident, hazard, chance, whatever you choose to

call it, a mystery to ordinary minds, becomes a reality to superior men. Turenne did not think about it, and so he had nothing but method. I think," he added, with a smile, "I should have beaten him. Condé had a better notion of it than Turenne, but he gave himself up to it with impetuosity. Prince Eugène is one of those who understood it best. Henry IV. always put bravery in the place of everything; he only fought actions —he would not have come well out of a pitched battle. Catinat has been cried up chiefly from the democratic point of view; I have, for my own part, carried off a victory on the spot where he was beaten. The philosophers have worked up his reputation after their own fancy, and that was all the easier to do, because one may say anything one likes about ordinary people who have been lifted into eminence by circumstances not of their own creating. A man, to be really great, no matter in what order of greatness, must have actually improvised a portion of his own glory—must have shown himself superior to the event which he has brought about. For instance, Cæsar occasionally acted with weakness which makes me suspect the praises that are lavished on him in history.

"I am rather doubtful of your friends the historians, M. de Fontanes. Even your Tacitus himself explains nothing; he arrives at certain results with-

out indicating the routes that have been followed. He is, I think, able as a writer, but hardly so as a statesman. He depicts Nero as an execrable tyrant, and then he tells us, almost in the same page with a description of the pleasure he felt in burning down Rome, that the people loved him. All that is not plain and clear. Believe me, we are sometimes the dupes of our beliefs—of writers who have fabricated history for us in accordance with the natural bent of their own minds. But do you know whose history I should like to read, if it were well written? That of King Frederick II. of Prussia. I hold him to be one of those who have best understood their business in every sort of way. These ladies"—here he turned to us—"will not be of my opinion; they will say that he was harsh and selfish. But, after all, is a great statesman made for feeling? Is he not a completely eccentric personage, who stands always alone, on his own side, with the world on the other. The glass through which he looks is that of his policy; his sole concern ought to be that it should neither magnify nor diminish. And while he observes objects with attention, he must also be careful to hold the reins equally; for the chariot which he drives is often drawn by ill-matched horses. How, then, is he to occupy himself with those fine distinctions of feeling which are important to the generality of mankind? Can

he consider the affections, the ties of kinship, the puerile arrangements of society? In such a position as his, how many actions are regarded separately, and condemned, although they are to contribute as a whole to that great work which the public does not understand? One day, those deeds will issue in the creation of the Colossus which will be the wonder of posterity. And you, mistaken as you are—you will withhold your praises, because you are afraid lest the movement of that great machine should crush you, as Gulliver crushed the Lilliputians when he moved his legs. Be advised; go on in advance of the time, enlarge your imagination, look out afar, and you will see that those great personages whom you think violent and cruel are only politic. They know themselves better, they judge themselves more correctly than you do; and, when they are really able men, they can master their passions, for they calculate the effects even of them."

From this, which was a kind of manifesto, the opinions of Bonaparte may be gathered, and also a notion of the rapid succession in which his ideas followed each other when he allowed himself to talk. It sometimes happened that his discourse would be less consecutive, for he put up well enough with interruptions; but on the day in question every one seemed to be benumbed in his presence; no

one ventured to apply his words in the sense which it was evident he intended. He had never ceased walking to and fro while he was talking, and this for more than an hour. Many other things which he said have escaped my memory. At length, abruptly breaking off the chain of his ideas, he directed M. de Fontanes to read aloud certain extracts from Drake's correspondence, which I have already mentioned, all relating to the conspiracy. When the reading of the extracts was concluded, "There are proofs here," said he, "that cannot be disputed. These people wanted to throw France into confusion, and to destroy the Revolution by destroying me; it was my duty both to defend and to avenge the Revolution. I have proved of what it is capable. The Duc d'Enghien was a conspirator like any other, and he had to be treated as such. The whole affair, moreover, was arranged without caution or accurate knowledge of facts, on the faith of some obscure correspondence—a few credulous old women wrote letters, and were believed. The Bourbons will never see anything except through the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, and they are fated to be perpetually deluded. The Polignacs made sure that every house in Paris would be open to them, and when they arrived here, not a single noble would receive them. If all these fools were to kill me, they would not get their own way; they would only put angry Jacobins

in my place. The day of etiquette is over—but the Bourbons cannot give it up. If ever you see them return, mark my words, etiquette will be the first subject that will occupy their minds. Ah! it would have been another story could they have been seen, like Henry V., covered with dust and blood on a battle-field. A kingdom is not got back by dating a letter from London, and signing it 'Louis.' Nevertheless, such a letter compromises imprudent people, and I am obliged to punish them, although I feel a sort of pity for them. I have shed blood; it was necessary to do so. I may have to shed more, but not out of anger—simply because blood-letting is one of the remedies in political medicine. I am the man of the State; I am the French Revolution. I say it, and I will uphold it."

After this last declaration, Bonaparte dismissed us all. We dispersed without daring to interchange our ideas, and thus ended this fatal day.*

* The murder of the Duc d'Enghien is an inexhaustible subject of controversy between the opponents of the Empire and the supporters of Napoleon. In the most recent and important works of historians and memoir-writers, there is nothing to contradict the above narrative, which possesses, moreover, every mark of sincerity and truthfulness. The First Consul originated and ordered the crime; Savary and the military commission executed it; M. de Caulaincourt was the unconscious medium. A full account of the trial may be found in a work entitled "Le Duc d'Enghien d'après les Documents Historiques," par L. Constant. In-8. Paris, 1869. The following extract from

Chateaubriand's "Mémoires d'Outre-tombe" will, I think, be of interest at this point, although the work does not rank among the best productions of its author, and cannot be absolutely relied on. Nevertheless, M. de Chateaubriand's resignation of his post on the day following the crime is justly held honourable to him. "A council was held on the proposed arrest of the Duc d'Enghien. Cambacérès, in his unpublished Memoirs, asserts—and I believe him—that he opposed the arrest; but although he records his own words, he does not say what replies they elicited. The 'Mémorial de Ste. Hélène' denies, however, that Bonaparte had to refuse any entreaties for clemency. The imaginary scene in which Josephine begs on her knees for the life of the Duc d'Enghien, and, clinging to the coat of Napoleon, is dragged along the ground by her inexorable husband, is one of those melodramatic inventions with which the fiction-writers of the present day compose their veracious histories. On the evening of March 19th, Josephine was in ignorance that the Duc d'Enghien was to be tried; she only knew that he had been arrested. She had promised Madame de Rémusat to interest herself in his fate. . . . On the 21st of March, Bonaparte said to his wife, 'The Duc d'Enghien has been shot.' The Memoirs of Madame de Rémusat, with whom I was acquainted, were full of exceedingly curious details of the private life of the Imperial Court. Their author burned them during the Hundred Days, but afterwards rewrote them. They are now but recollections of former recollections; the colours are faded; but Bonaparte is always clearly depicted and impartially judged."—P. R.

CHAPTER VI.

1804.

The impression produced in Paris by the death of the Duc d'Enghien—The First Consul's efforts to dispel it—Performance at the Opera House—Death of Pichegru—Breach between Bonaparte and his brother Lucien—Project of adopting the young Napoleon—Institution of the Empire.

THE First Consul spared no pains to allay the excitement which was caused by this event. He perceived that his conduct had raised the question of his real character, and he set himself to prove, both by his speeches in the Council of State, and also to all of us, that political considerations only, and not passion of any kind, had led to the death of the Duc d'Enghien. As I said before, he made no attempt to check the genuine indignation evinced by M. de Caulaincourt, and towards me he was so indulgent that he once more unsettled my opinions. How strong a power of persuasion do sovereigns, whatever their character, exercise over us! Our feelings, and to be frank, our vanity also, run to meet their slightest advances half-way. I grieved, but I felt

myself being slowly won over by the adroitness of Bonaparte, and I cried—

"Plut à Dieu que ce fût le dernier de tes crimes!"

Meanwhile we returned to Paris, and my feelings were again painfully excited by the state of opinion there. I could make no reply to what was said. I could only try to persuade those who believed that this fatal act was but the beginning of a blood-stained reign, that they were mistaken; and while it would be difficult to exaggerate the impression that such a crime must produce, still party spirit ran so high that, although my own feelings revolted against it, I sometimes found myself endeavouring to offer some sort of excuse for it—uselessly enough, since I was addressing people whose convictions were unalterable.

I had a warm discussion with Madame de ——, a cousin of Madame Bonaparte's. She was one of those persons who did not attend the evening receptions at the Tuileries, but who, having divided the palace into two separate regions, considered that they might appear in Madame Bonaparte's apartment on the ground floor in the morning, without departing from their principles, or sullying their reminiscences, by recognition of the actual Government on the first floor.

She was a clever, animated woman, with rather high-flown notions, and she frightened Madame

Bonaparte by her vehement indignation. Finding me with her one day, she attacked me with equal vigour, and compassionated both of us for being, as she said, bound in chains to a tyrant. She went so far that I tried to make her understand the distress she was inflicting on her cousin. Then she turned violently upon me, and accused me of not sufficiently appreciating the horror of the event that had just taken place. "As for me," she said, "every sense and every feeling is so outraged, that if your Consul were to come into this room, you would see me fly on the instant, as one flies from a venomous beast." "Ah, Madame," I answered (little thinking that my words would prove prophetic), "refrain from expressions which at some future day may prove embarrassing to you. Weep with us, but bear in mind that words uttered in a moment of excitement often complicate one's subsequent actions. To-day you are angry with me for my apparent moderation; yet, perhaps, my feelings will last longer than yours."

And, in fact, a few months later, Madame de —— became Lady-in-Waiting to her cousin, the newly-made Empress.

Hume says that Cromwell, having established a sort of phantom royalty, very soon found himself surrounded by that particular class of nobles, who conceive themselves called on to live in palaces so

soon as their doors are reopened. The First Consul, on assuming the insignia of the power he already wielded, offered a salve to the conscience of the old nobility which their vanity eagerly applied—for who can resist the temptation of recovering the rank he feels himself made to adorn? I am about to draw a very homely comparison, but I believe a true one. In the nature of the *grand seigneur* there is something of the character of the cat, which remains faithful to the same house, no matter who may come to live in it.

Bonaparte, stained with the blood of the Duc d'Enghien, but having become an Emperor, succeeded in obtaining from the French nobles that for which he would have vainly sought so long as he was only First Consul; and when, in later days, he maintained to one of his Ministers that this murder was indeed a crime, but not a blunder—"for," he added, "the consequences that I foresaw have all exactly happened"—he was, in one sense, right.

And yet, if we look at things from a higher standpoint, the consequences of this act of his reached farther than he thought. He succeeded, doubtless, in moderating certain opinions, for there are numbers of people who give up feeling when there is nothing to hope; but, as M. de Rémusat said, the odium which the crime cast upon

him obliged him to divert our thoughts from it by a succession of extraordinary feats, which would impose silence respecting the past. Moreover, he bound himself, as it were, to be always successful, for by success alone could he be justified. If we contemplate the tortuous and difficult path he was henceforth obliged to tread, we shall conclude that a noble and pure policy, based upon the prosperity of the human race and the free exercise of its rights, would have been then, as it is always, the best on which a sovereign can act.

By the death of the Duc d'Enghien, Bonaparte succeeded in compromising, first ourselves, then the French nobility, finally the whole nation and all Europe. Our fate was united with his, it is true—this was a great point for him; but when he dishonoured us, he lost the right to devotion and adherence, and he claimed them in vain when the hour of his ill fortune came. How could he reckon on a link, forged, it must be owned, at the cost of the noblest feelings of the soul? Alas! I judge by my own case. From that time forward I began to blush in secret at the chain I wore; and this feeling, which I suppressed with more or less success at different times, afterwards became the general sentiment.

On his return to Paris, the First Consul was struck by the effect he had produced. He perceived

that feelings move more slowly than opinions, and that men's countenances wore a new expression in his presence. Weary of a remembrance that he would have liked to have rendered a bygone from the very first, he thought the best plan was to let the people wear out their emotions as quickly as possible, and so he determined to appear in public, although certain persons advised him to defer doing so for a while. "But we must, at any cost," he answered, "throw that event into the past; and it will remain new so long as anything fresh is to be felt about it. If we change nothing in our habits, the public will soon regard the occurrence as an old affair." It was therefore arranged that he should go to the opera.

On that evening I was in attendance on Madame Bonaparte; her carriage followed her husband's. His usual custom was not to wait for her, but to pass rapidly up the staircase and show himself in his box; on this occasion, however, he waited in the little ante-room adjoining it, until Madame Bonaparte arrived. She was trembling very much, and he was excessively pale; he looked round at us all, as if mutely asking us how we thought he would be received; and then he went forward at last like a man marching up to a battery. He was greeted in the usual way, either because the sight of him produced its customary effect—for the

multitude do not change their habits in a moment—or because the police had taken measures of precaution beforehand. I had greatly feared he would not be applauded, and yet, when I saw that he was, my heart sank within me.

He remained only a few days in Paris; thence he removed to Saint Cloud, and I believe that from that time forth he began to carry his projects of sovereignty into execution. He felt the necessity of imposing upon Europe an authority which could no longer be contested, and at the very moment when he had just broken with all parties by deeds which he himself regarded as merely acts of vigour, he thought it well to reveal the goal towards which he had been advancing with more or less precaution. He began by obtaining from the legislative body, now assembled, a levy of sixty thousand men; not that he wanted them for the war with England, which could only be carried on by sea, but because he required to assume an imposing attitude when about to astonish Europe by an altogether novel incident. The Code of Civil Laws had just been completed; this was an important work, and was said to be worthy of general approval. The halls wherein the three great bodies of the State assembled rung on that occasion with the praises of Bonaparte. M. Marcorelle, a deputy of the Corps Législatif, moved, amid loud acclamations, on the

24th of March, three days after the death of the Duc d'Enghien, that a bust of the First Consul should be placed in the Chamber of Deputies. "Let us," he said, "by a striking mark of our affection, proclaim to Europe that he who has been threatened by the daggers of vile assassins is the object of our attachment and admiration."

A few days later, Fourcroy, a member of the Council of State, closed the session in the name of the Government. He alluded to the princes of the House of Bourbon as "members of that unnatural family which would have drowned France in her own blood, so that they might reign over her," and he added that they must be threatened with death if they ventured to pollute French territory by their presence.

Meanwhile, preparations for the great trial were going on; Chouans, who were concerned in the conspiracy, were arrested every day, either in Brittany or in Paris, and Georges Cadoudal, Pichegru, and Moreau had already been examined several times. The two first, it was said, answered with firmness; Moreau appeared to be much dejected. No clear information was obtained by these interrogatories.

One morning, General Pichegru was found strangled in his prison. This event, which was unhesitatingly attributed to the need of getting rid of

a formidable enemy, made a great sensation. Pichegru's determination of character would, it was said, have led him, when the proceedings became public, to utter strong language, which would have had an undesirable effect. He would, perhaps, have created a party in his favour; he would have cleared Moreau, whose guilt it was already so difficult to prove. On the other hand, the partisans of Bonaparte said:— "Nobody can doubt that Pichegru came to Paris in order to get up an insurrection. He himself does not deny it. His own avowals would have convinced the most incredulous; his absence will prevent that full light, which is so desirable, from being thrown on the proceedings."

Many years afterwards, I asked M. de Talleyrand what he thought of the death of Pichegru. "I think," said he, "that it happened very suddenly and in the nick of time!" But just then M. de Talleyrand had fallen out with Bonaparte, and took every opportunity of bringing accusations against him; I therefore by no means commit myself to any statement respecting that event. The subject was not spoken of at Saint Cloud, and every one refrained from the slightest reflection on it.

About this time Lucien Bonaparte left France, having quarrelled irrevocably with his brother. His marriage with Madame Jouberthon, which

Bonaparte had been unable to prevent, was the cause of the rupture. The Consul, full of his great projects, made a last attempt to induce him to renounce this marriage; but it was in vain that Lucien was apprised of the approaching grandeur of his family, in vain that a marriage with the Queen of Etruria * was proposed to him. "Love was the strongest," and he refused everything. A violent quarrel ensued, and Lucien was exiled from France.

On this occasion I happened to see the First Consul give way to one of those rare bursts of emotion to which I have alluded. It was at Saint Cloud, rather late one evening. Madame Bonaparte was anxiously waiting the result of the final conference between the two brothers; M. de Rémusat and I were the only persons with her. She did not care for Lucien, but she deprecated any family scandal. It was near midnight when Bonaparte came into the room; he was deeply dejected, and throwing himself into an armchair, he

* After the treaty of Luneville, in 1801, Tuscany had been erected into the kingdom of Etruria and given to the son of the Duke of Parma. The king having died in 1803, his widow, Marie Louise, a daughter of Charles IV., King of Spain, succeeded him and reigned until 1807, at which period the little kingdom was incorporated with the Empire, to be again dismembered in 1809 in favour of Madame Bacciochi, who took the title of Grand Duchess of Tuscany.

exclaimed, in a troubled voice, "It is all over! I have broken with Lucien, and ordered him from my presence." Madame Bonaparte began to expostulate. "You are a good woman," he said, "to plead for him." Then he rose from his chair, took his wife in his arms, and laid her head softly on his shoulder, and with his hand still resting on the beautiful bright head which formed a contrast to the sad, set countenance so near it, he told us that Lucien had resisted all his entreaties, and that he had resorted equally in vain to both threats and persuasion. "It is hard, though," he added, "to find in one's own family such stubborn opposition to interests of such magnitude. Must I, then, isolate myself from every one? Must I rely on myself alone? Well! I will suffice to myself, and you, Josephine—you will be my comfort always."

I retain a pleasurable recollection of this little scene. Tears were in Bonaparte's eyes as he spoke. I felt inclined to thank him when he betrayed feelings like those of other men. Shortly after this, his brother Louis crossed his wishes in another way, and one which largely affected the fate of Madame Bonaparte.

The Consul, being quite resolved to raise himself to the throne of France and to found a dynasty, had already occasionally entertained the idea of a divorce; but, either because of his attachment to his

wife being still too strong, or because his existing relations with Europe did not permit him to hope for an alliance which would strengthen his political position, he seemed just then disinclined to break with Josephine, and disposed to adopt the young Louis Napoleon, who was his own nephew, and also Josephine's grandson.

He no sooner allowed this project to be discerned, than his family rebelled. Joseph Bonaparte ventured to represent to him that he had done nothing to forfeit the right to the prospective crown, which, as the eldest brother, would be his, and he defended that right as if it had really existed of old.

Bonaparte, always irritated by opposition, grew very angry, and only the more determined. He confided his intentions to his wife, who was overjoyed, and spoke to me as though the realization of this project would bring her own anxieties to an end. Madame Louis assented, but without displaying any gratification. She was not at all ambitious, and, in fact, could not help fearing that such an elevation would bring down misfortune on the head of her son.

One day, when Bonaparte was surrounded by his family, he placed the little Napoleon between his knees, and said, while playing with him, "Do you know, my little fellow, that you run the risk of being a king some day?" "And Achille?" * immediately

* Achille was the eldest son of Murat.

asked Murat, who was present. "Oh, Achille," answered Bonaparte, "will be a great soldier." This reply incensed Madame Murat; but Bonaparte, pretending not to notice her, and stung by his brother's opposition, which he believed with reason to have been prompted by Madame Murat, went on to say to his little step-grandson, "And mind, my poor child, I advise you, if you value your life, not to accept invitations to dine with your cousins."

We may imagine to what feelings such a speech would give rise. From that moment Louis Bonaparte was beset by his family, who adroitly reminded him of the rumours respecting his wife, and that he ought not to sacrifice the interests of his own kinsfolk to those of a child who was at least half a Beauharnais; and, as Louis Bonaparte was not quite so destitute of ambition as people have since made him out, he, like Joseph, went to the First Consul to ask why the sacrifice of his own rights should be demanded of him. "Why," said he, "should I yield my share of inheritance to my son? How have I deserved to be cut off? What will my position be when my child, taking that of yours, finds himself very much higher placed than I, and quite independent of me, standing next to yourself, and regarding me with suspicion, if not with contempt? No; I will never consent to this; and, rather than renounce the proper course of succession

to the royalty which is to be yours, rather than consent to humble myself before my own son, I will leave France, taking Napoleon with me, and we shall see whether you will venture openly to take a child from his father!"

The First Consul, powerful as he was, found it impossible to overcome his brother's opposition. His wrath availed nothing, and he was obliged to yield, for fear of a vexatious and even ridiculous scandal; for such it certainly would have been, that this whole family should quarrel beforehand over the crown which France had not yet actually conferred.

The strife was hushed up, and Napoleon was obliged to draw up the scheme of succession, and the possible case of adoption which he reserved to himself the power of making, in the terms of the existing decree for the elevation of the First Consul to the Empire.

These quarrels embittered the enmity already existing between the Bonapartes and the Beauharnais. The former regarded the plan of adoption as the result of Madame Bonaparte's scheming. Louis gave stricter orders than before to his wife that she should hold no familiar intercourse with her mother. "If you consult her interests at the cost of mine," he told her, "I swear to you that I will make you repent of it. I will separate you from your son; I will shut you up in some out-of-the-way

place, and no power on earth shall deliver you. You shall pay for your concessions to your own family by the wretchedness of the rest of your life. And take care, above all, that none of my threats reach the ears of my brother. Even his power should not save you from my anger."

Madame Louis bowed her head, a patient victim to his violence. She was then expecting the birth of her second child. Grief and anxiety told upon her health, which was permanently injured; the fresh complexion, her only beauty, disappeared. She had naturally, high spirits, but they now died away for ever; and she became silent and timid. She refrained from confiding her troubles to her mother, whose indiscretion and hasty temper she dreaded; and neither would she further irritate the First Consul. He, knowing well his brother's character, felt grateful to her for her reticence, but suspected what she had to endure. From that time forth he never let an opportunity pass without exhibiting the interest—I may even say the respect—with which the mild and prudent demeanour of his stepdaughter inspired him.

What I have just said is quite opposed to the general opinion which has unfortunately been entertained of this unhappy woman; but her vindictive sisters-in-law never missed an opportunity of injuring her reputation by the most

odious calumnies, and as she bore the name of Bonaparte, the public, who, when they came to hate the Imperial despotism, included every one belonging to the family in their impartial contempt, readily believed every calumny against Madame Louis. Her husband (whose ill-treatment of her irritated him all the more against her), obliged to own that she could not love him after the tyranny he had exercised, jealous with the jealousy of pride, and naturally suspicious, soured by ill health, and utterly selfish, made her feel the full weight of conjugal despotism. She was surrounded by spies; her letters were opened before they reached her hands; her conversations even with female friends were resented; and if she complained of this insulting severity, he would say to her, "You cannot love me. You are a woman; consequently a being all made up of evil and deceit. You are the daughter of an unprincipled mother; you belong to a family that I loathe; are not these reasons enough for me to suspect you?"

Madame Louis, from whom I heard all these details long afterwards, found her only comfort in the affection of her brother, whose conduct, though jealously watched by the Bonapartes, was unassailable. Eugène, who was simple and frank, light-hearted, and open in all his dealings, displaying no ambition, holding himself aloof from every

intrigue, and doing his duty wherever he was placed, disarmed calumny before it could reach him, and knew nothing of what took place in the palace. His sister loved him passionately, and confided her sorrows to him only, during the few moments that the suspicious jealousy of Louis allowed them to pass together.

Meanwhile, the First Consul, having complained to the Elector of Bavaria of the correspondence which Mr. Drake kept up in France, and that English gentleman entertaining some apprehensions as to his own safety, as did also Sir Spencer Smith, the British Envoy at the Court of Wurtemburg, they both disappeared suddenly. Lord Morpeth asked the Government, in the House of Commons, for an explanation of Drake's conduct. The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that the Envoy had been given authority for his proceedings, and that a fuller explanation should be afforded when the ambassador had furnished the information that had been demanded from him.

At this time Bonaparte held long and frequent consultations with M. de Talleyrand. The latter, whose opinions were essentially monarchical, urged the Consul to change his title to that of King. He has since told me that the word "Emperor" alarmed him; it conveyed a sense of vagueness and immensity, but it charmed the imagination of Bona-

parte precisely for that reason. He added, "A combination of the Roman Republic and of Charlemagne in the title turned his head. I amused myself one day by mystifying Berthier; I took him aside, and said to him, 'You know of the great scheme that is occupying us. Go to the Consul, and urge him to take the title of King; it will please him.' Accordingly Berthier, who was delighted to have an opportunity of speaking to Bonaparte on an agreeable subject, went up to him at the other end of the room in which we were all assembled, and I drew back a little, foreseeing the storm. Berthier began his little speech, but at the word 'King' Bonaparte's eyes flashed fire; he seized Berthier by the throat, and pushed him back against the wall. 'You idiot!' he said; 'who has been advising you to come here and excite my anger? Another time, don't take such a task on yourself.' Poor Berthier, in dire confusion, looked piteously at me, and it was a long time before he forgave my sorry jest."

At last, on the 30th of April, 1804, Curée, the tribune, who had no doubt learnt his part, and who, later on, was rewarded for his complaisance by being created a senator, made what was then called "a motion of order" in the Tribunate, demanding that the government of the Republic should be confided to an Emperor, and that the Empire should be made hereditary in the family of Napoleon Bona-

parte. His speech was effective. He regarded an hereditary succession, he said, as a guarantee against plots from without, and in reality the title of Emperor only meant "Victorious Consul." Nearly all the tribunes put down their names to speak. A commission of thirteen members was appointed. Carnot alone had the courage to protest against this proposal. He declared that he would vote against an Empire, for the same reason that he had voted against a life-Consulship, but without any personal animosity, and that he was quite prepared to render obedience to the Emperor, should he be elected. He spoke in high praise of the American form of government, and added that Bonaparte might have adopted it at the time of the treaty of Amiens; that the abuses of despotism led to worse results than the abuses of liberty; and that, before smoothing the way to this despotism, which would be all the more dangerous because it was built on military success, it would have been advisable to create institutions for its due repression. Notwithstanding Carnot's opposition, the motion was put to the vote and adopted.

On the 4th of May, a deputation from the Tribunate carried it to the Senate, who were already prepared for it. The Vice-President, François de Neufchateau, replied that the Senate had expected the vote, and would take it into consideration. At the same

sitting, it was decided that the motion of the Tribunate and the answer of the Vice-President should be laid before the First Consul.

On the 5th, the Senate sent an address to Bonaparte, asking him, without further explanation, for a final act which would ensure the future peace of France. His answer to this address may be read in the *Moniteur*:—"I beg you," he said, "to let me know your entire purpose. I desire that we may be able to say to the French nation on the 14th of next July, 'The possessions you acquired fifteen years ago, liberty, equality, and glory, are now beyond the reach of every storm.'" In reply, the Senate voted unanimously for Imperial government, adding that, in the interests of the French people, it was important that it should be entrusted to Napoleon Bonaparte.

After the 8th, addresses from the towns poured in at Saint Cloud. An address from Lyons came first; a little later came those from Paris and other places. At the same time came the vote from Klein's division,* and then that from the troops in camp at Montreuil under the orders of General Ney;† and the other divisions promptly followed these examples.

* General Klein afterwards married the daughter of the Countess d'Arberg, a Lady-in-Waiting. He was created senator and remained a peer under the King.

† Afterwards Marshal Ney.

M. de Fontanes addressed the First Consul in the name of the Corps Législatif, which at this moment was not sitting; but those among its members who were then in Paris, met, and voted as the Senate had done. The excitement caused at Saint Cloud by these events may readily be imagined.

I have already recorded the disappointment which Louis Bonaparte's rejection of the project of adoption had inflicted on his mother-in-law. She still hoped, however, that the First Consul would contrive, if he himself remained in the same mind, to overcome the opposition of his brother, and she expressed her relief that her husband's new prospects had not induced him to reconsider the terrible question of the divorce. Whenever Bonaparte was displeased with his brothers, Madame Bonaparte always rose in his estimation, because he found consolation in the unfailing sweetness of her disposition. She never tried to extract from him any promise either for herself or for her children, and the confidence she showed in his affection, together with the disinterestedness of Eugène, when contrasted with the exactions of the Bonaparte family, could not fail to please him. Mesdames Bacciochi and Murat, who were in great anxiety about coming events, endeavoured to worm out of M. de Talleyrand, or out of Fouché, the secret projects of the First Consul, so that they might know what to expect. Their per-

turbation was beyond their power to conceal; and it was with some amusement that I detected it in their troubled glances, and in every word they let fall.

At last we were told, one evening, that on the following day the Senate was to come in great state and lay before Bonaparte the decree which should give him a crown. When I recall that evening, the emotions I experienced return to me. The First Consul, when informing his wife of the coming event, had told her he intended to surround himself with a more numerous Court, but that he would fitly distinguish between the new-comers and those old servants who had first devoted themselves to his service. He particularly desired her to assure M. de Rémusat and me of his good-will towards us. I have already related how patiently he bore with the dismay which I was unable to hide on the occasion of the death of the Duc d'Enghien. His indulgence on this point did not diminish; perhaps it amused him to pry into my secret feelings, and gradually to appease them, by kindness so marked that it revived my flagging attachment to him.

I could not as yet overcome my feelings towards him. I grieved over his great fault; but when I saw that he was, so to speak, a better man than formerly, although I still believed he had made a fatal mistake, I felt grateful to him for keeping

his word and being gentle and kind afterwards, as he had promised. The fact is that at this period he could not afford to dispense with anybody, and he therefore neglected no means of success. By dexterous behaviour towards M. de Caulaincourt he had won him over so that he had gradually recovered his former serenity of mind, and was at this time one of the confidants of the First Consul's schemes. Bonaparte, having questioned his wife as to what each person at Court had said at the time of the prince's death, learned from her that M. de Rémusat, who was habitually reticent both from inclination and from prudence, but who always spoke the truth when asked, had not hesitated to express his indignation. Being apparently resolved that nothing should irritate him, he broached the subject to M. de Rémusat, and, having revealed to him as much of his policy as he thought proper, succeeded in convincing my husband that he had really believed the duke's death indispensable to the safety of France. My husband, when repeating this conversation to me, said, "I am far from agreeing with him that this deed of blood was needed to establish his authority, and I did not hesitate to tell him so; but I own that it is a relief to me to think he did not commit the crime out of revenge. He is evidently distressed, no matter what he may say, by the effect it has produced, and I believe he will never again

seek to strengthen his authority by such terrible means. I did not fail to point out to him that in an age like ours, and in a nation like ours, it is playing a dangerous game to rule by terror and bloodshed, and I think that the earnest attention with which he listened to me augurs well for the future."

This sincere avowal of what we both felt shows how much need we had of hope. Severe judges might blame us, no doubt, for the facility with which we again deceived ourselves, and impute our credulity, with apparent justice, to our own position in the Court. Ah! it is so hard to have to blush in secret for the calling one has chosen; it is so pleasant to like one's self-imposed duties; it is so natural to paint in bright colours one's own and one's country's future, that it is only after a long struggle the conviction of a truth which must shatter one's whole life is admitted. Such a truth did come home to us, slowly, but with a force that could not be gainsaid, and we paid dearly for an error to which all well-disposed persons clung as long as possible.

On the 18th of May, 1804, the Second Consul, Cambacérès, President of the Senate, came to Saint Cloud, accompanied by all the senators and escorted by a large body of troops. He made a set speech, and gave to Bonaparte for the first time the title of

"Your Majesty." Bonaparte took it coolly, just as though he had borne it all his life. The Senate then proceeded to the apartment of Madame Bonaparte, who in her turn was proclaimed Empress. She replied with that natural grace which always raised her to the level of any position, however lofty, in which she might be placed.

At the same time, the Grand Dignitaries, as they were called, were created—Grand Elector, Joseph Bonaparte; High Constable, Louis Bonaparte; Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, Cambacérès; Arch-Treasurer, Lebrun. The Ministers, Maret (the Secretary of State, who ranked with the Ministers), the Colonels-general of the Guards, Duroc (the Governor of the Palace), and the Aides-de-camp took the oaths; and the next day the officers of the army, among whom was Colonel Eugène Beauharnais, were presented to the Emperor by the new Constable.

The opposition that Bonaparte had encountered in his own family, to his intended adoption of the little Louis, induced him to postpone the project. The succession was therefore declared to belong to the heirs male of Napoleon Bonaparte, and failing these, to the sons of Joseph, and of Louis, respectively. The organic *senatus consultum* declared that the Emperor might adopt as his successor any one of his nephews whom he chose, but not until the selected individual had attained the age

of eighteen, and that no further act of adoption could take place in the family.

The civil list was to be the same as that granted to the King in 1791, and the princes were to be endowed in accordance with the law of the 20th December, 1791. The great dignitaries were to have one-third of the sum settled on the princes. They were to preside over the electoral colleges of the six largest towns in the Empire, and the princes, from the eighteenth year of their age, were to be permanent members of the Senate and the Council of State.

Fourteen Marshals of France were created at this date, and the title of Marshal was conferred on four of the Senators. The new Marshals were Berthier, Murat, Moncey, Jourdan, Masséna, Augereau, Bernadotte, Soult, Brune, Lannes, Mortier, Ney, Davoust, Bessières; the four Senators were Kellerman, Lefebvre, Pérignon, and Sérrurier.

An article in the *Moniteur* apprised the public that the title of Imperial Highness was to be given to the princes, that of Serene Highness and Monseigneur to the great dignitaries; that the Ministers were to be addressed as "Monsigneur" by public officials and all petitioners, and the Marshals as "Monsieur le Maréchal."

Thus disappeared the title of "Citizen," long since disused in society, where "Monsieur" had

resumed its former place, but which Bonaparte was always most careful to employ. On the same day, the 18th of May, his brothers, with Cambacérès and Lebrun and the officers of his household, were invited to dine with him, and we heard him use the old word "Monsieur" for the first time, without being betrayed by habit into saying "Citizen" even once.

Titles were also accorded to the great officers of the Empire, eight inspectors and colonels-general of artillery, engineers, cavalry, and the navy, and the great civil officers of the Crown, to whom I shall refer hereafter.

CHAPTER VII.

Effects and causes of the accession of Bonaparte to the Imperial throne—The Emperor converses—The grievances of Madame Murat—The character of M. de Rémusat—The new Court.

THE accession of Bonaparte to the Imperial throne was very variously regarded in Europe, and even in France opinions were divided. It is, however, quite certain that it did not displease the great majority of the nation. The Jacobins were not astonished by it, for they themselves were in the habit of pushing success as far as it would go, whenever luck favoured them. Among the Royalists it spread disheartenment, and that was just what Bonaparte wanted. The exchange of the Consulate for Imperial authority was, however, regarded with dislike by all true friends of liberty. These true friends were, unfortunately, divided into two classes, so that their influence was diminished—an evil which still exists. One class regarded the change of the reigning dynasty with indifference, and would have accepted Bonaparte as readily as another, provided that he had received his royal authority in right of a constitution which would have restrained as well

as founded it. They regarded the seizure of power by an enterprising and warlike man with serious apprehension; for it was plain enough that the so-called "bodies of the State," which were already reduced to insignificance, would be unable to check his encroachments. The Senate seemed to be given over to mere passive obedience, the Tribunate was shaken to its foundations, and what was to be expected from a silent Corps Législatif? The Ministers, deprived of all responsibility, were no more than head clerks, and it was evident beforehand that the Council of State would henceforth be merely a storehouse, whence such laws as circumstances might demand could be taken, as occasion for them arose.

If this section of the friends of liberty had been more numerous and better led, it might have set itself to demand the settled and legitimate exercise of its rights, which is never demanded in vain by a nation in the long run. There existed, however, a second party, which agreed with the first on fundamental principles only, and, abiding by theories of its own, which it had already attempted to practise in a dangerous and sanguinary manner, lost the opportunity of producing an effective opposition. To this section belonged the proselytes of the Anglo-American Government, who had disgusted the nation with the notion of liberty.

They had witnessed the creation of the Consulate without any protest, for it was a tolerably fair imitation of the Presidentship of the United States; they believed, or wished to believe, that Bonaparte would maintain that equality of rights to which they attached so much importance, and some among them were really deceived. I say "some," because I think the greater number fell into a trap, baited with flattery and consultations on all sorts of matters, which Bonaparte dexterously set for them. If they had not had some private interest to serve by deceiving themselves, how could they have declared afterwards that they had approved of Bonaparte as Consul only, but that as Emperor he was odious to them? In what respect was he, while Consul, different from his ordinary self? What was his Consular authority but dictatorship under another name? Did he not, as Consul, make peace and declare war without consulting the nation? Did not the right of levying the conscription devolve upon him? Did he permit freedom in the discussion of affairs? Could any journal publish a single article without his approval? Did he not make it perfectly clear that he held his power by the right of his victorious arms? How, then, could stern Republicans have allowed him to take them by surprise?

I can understand how it was that men, worn out

by the turmoil of the Revolution, and afraid of that liberty which had been so long associated with death, looked for repose under the dominion of an able ruler, on whom fortune was seemingly resolved to smile. I can conceive that they regarded his elevation as a decree of destiny, and fondly believed that in the irrevocable they should find peace. I may confidently assert that those persons believed quite sincerely that Bonaparte, whether as Consul or as Emperor, would exert his authority to oppose the attempts of faction, and would save us from the perils of anarchy.

None dared to utter the word Republic, so deeply had the Terror stained that name, and the Directorial Government had perished in the contempt with which its chiefs were regarded. The return of the Bourbons could only be brought about by the aid of a revolution; and the slightest disturbance terrified the French people, in whom enthusiasm of every kind was apparently dead. Besides, the men in whom they had trusted had, one after the other, deceived them; and as, this time, they were yielding to force, they were at least certain that they were not deceiving themselves.

The belief, or rather the error, that only despotism could, at that epoch, maintain order in France, was very widespread. It became the mainstay of Bonaparte; and it is due to him to say that he also

held it. The factions played into his hands by imprudent attempts which he turned to his own advantage; he had some grounds for his belief that he was necessary; France shared that belief; and he even succeeded in persuading foreign sovereigns that he formed a barrier against Republican influences, which, but for him, might spread widely. At the moment when Bonaparte placed the Imperial crown upon his head, there was not a king in Europe who did not believe that he wore his own crown more securely because of that event. Had the new Emperor added to that decisive act the gift of a liberal constitution, the peace of nations and of kings might, in sober seriousness, have been for ever secured.

Sincere defenders of Bonaparte's original system—and some of these still exist—advance, in justification of it, that we could not have exacted from him that which it belongs only to a legitimate sovereign to bestow; that freedom to discuss our interests might have been followed by the discussion of our rights; that England, jealous of our reviving prosperity, would have fomented fresh disturbances among us; that our princes had not abandoned their designs, and that the slow methods of constitutional government would not have availed to restrain the contending factions. Hume says, when speaking of Cromwell, that the great difficulty of a usurping

Government is that its personal policy is generally opposed to the interest of the country. This gives a superiority to hereditary authority, of which it would be well that all nations should be aware. But, after all, Bonaparte was not an ordinary usurper; his elevation offered no point of comparison with that of Cromwell. "I found the crown of France lying on the ground," said he, "and I took it up on the point of my sword." He was the product of an inevitable revolution; but he had no share in its disasters, and I sincerely believe that, until the death of the Duc d'Enghien, it would have been possible for him to legitimize his power by conferring upon France benefits of a kind which would have pledged the nation to him and his for ever.

His despotic ambition misled him; but, I say it again, he was not the only one who went astray. He was beguiled by appearances which he did not take the trouble to investigate; the word "liberty" did indeed resound in the air about him, but those who uttered it were not held in sufficient esteem by the nation to be made its representatives to him. Well-meaning, honest folk asked nothing of him but repose, and did not trouble themselves about the form under which it was to be granted. And then, he knew well that the secret weakness of the French nation was vanity, and he saw a means of gratifying it easily by the pomp and display that attend on

monarchical power. He revived distinctions which were now, in reality, democratic, because they were placed within the reach of all, and they entailed no privileges. The eagerness displayed in the pursuit of these titles, and of crosses, which were objects of derision while they hung on the coats of one's neighbours, was not likely to undeceive him, if indeed he was on the wrong road. Was it not natural, on the contrary, that he should applaud and congratulate himself, when he had succeeded in bringing feudal and republican pretensions to the same level, by the assistance of a few bits of ribbons, and some words added to men's names? Had not we ourselves much to do with the belief which became so firmly fixed in his mind—that, for his own safety and for ours, he ought to use the power which he possessed to suspend the Revolution without destroying it? "My successor," said he, "whoever he may be, will be forced to march with his own times, and to find his support in liberal opinions. I will bequeath them to him, but without their primitive crudeness." France imprudently applauded this idea.

Nevertheless, a warning voice—that of conscience for him, that of our interests for us—spoke to him and to us alike. He could silence that importunate whisper only by dazzling us with a series of surprising feats. Hence those interminable wars,

whose duration was so all-important to him that he always called each peace which he signed "a halt," and hence the fact that he was forced into every one of his treaties by M. de Talleyrand's skill in negotiation. When he returned to Paris, and resumed the administration of the affairs of France, in addition to the fact that he did not know what to do with an army, whose demands grew with its victories, he had to encounter the dumb, but steady, and inevitable resistance which the spirit of the age, in spite of individual proclivities, opposes to despotism; so that despotism has happily become an impracticable mode of government. It died with the good fortune of Bonaparte, when, as Madame de Staël said, "The terrible mace which he alone could wield fell at last upon his own head." Happy, thrice happy, are the days in which we are now living, since we have exhausted every experiment, and only madmen can dispute the road which leads to safety.

Bonaparte was seconded for a long time by the military ardour of the youth of France. That insensate passion for conquest which has been implanted by an evil spirit in men collected into societies, to retard the progress of each generation in every kind of prosperity, urged us forward in the track of Bonaparte's devastating career. France can rarely resist glory, which was especially

tempting when it covered and disguised the humiliation to which we were submitting. When Bonaparte was quiet, he let us perceive the reality of our servitude; when our sons marched away to plant our standards on the ramparts of all the great cities of Europe, that servitude disappeared. It was a long time before we recognized in each one of our conquests a link in the chain that fettered our liberties, and when we became fully aware of what our delirium had led us into, it was too late for resistance. The army had become the accomplice of tyranny, had broken with France, and would have treated a cry for deliverance as a revolt.

The greatest of Bonaparte's errors,—one very characteristic of him,—was that he never took anything but success into account in the calculations on which he acted. Perhaps he was more excusable than another would have been in doubting whether any reverse could come to him. His natural pride shrank from the idea of a defeat of any kind; there was the weak point in his strong mind. Such a man as he, ought to have contemplated every contingency. But as he lacked nobility of soul, and had not that instinctive elevation of mind which rises above evil fortune, he turned his thoughts away from this weakness in himself, and considered only his wonderful faculty of growing greater with

success. "*I shall win*," was the basis of all his calculations, and his obstinate repetition of the phrase helped him to realize the prediction. At length his own good fortune grew into a superstition with him, and his worship of it made every sacrifice which was to be imposed upon us fair and lawful in his eyes.

And we ourselves—let us once more own it—did we not at first share this baleful superstition? At the time of which I write it had great mastery over our wonder-loving imaginations. The trial of General Moreau and the death of the Duc d'Enghien had shocked everybody, but had not changed public opinion. Bonaparte scarcely tried to conceal that both events had furthered the project which for a long time past he had been maturing. It is to the credit of human nature that repugnance to crime is innate among us, that we willingly believe, when a guilty act is acknowledged by its perpetrator, that he has been absolutely forced to commit it; and when he succeeded in raising himself by such deeds, we too readily accepted the bargain he offered us—absolution on our part, as the guerdon of success on his.

Thenceforth he was no longer beloved; but the days in which monarchs reign through the love of nations are gone by; and Bonaparte, letting us see that he could punish even our thoughts, was

well pleased to exchange the affection we had striven to retain for him, for the very real fear he inspired. We admired, or at least we wondered at, the boldness of the game which he was openly playing; and when at last he sprang, with imposing audacity, from the blood-stained grave at Vincennes to the steps of the Imperial throne, exclaiming, "I have won!" France, in her amazement, could but re-echo his words. And that was all he wanted her to do.

A few days after Bonaparte had assumed the title of Emperor (by which I shall not scruple to designate him, for, after all, he bore it longer than that of Consul *), on one of those occasions when, as I have said before, he was disposed to talk freely to us, he was discussing his new position with the Empress, my husband, and myself. I think I see him now, in the window-recess of a drawing-room at Saint Cloud, astride on a chair, resting his chin on the back of it. Madame Bonaparte reclined on a sofa near him; I was sitting opposite him, and M. de Rémusat stood behind my chair. For a long time the Emperor had been silent; then he suddenly addressed me; "You have borne me a grudge for the death of the Duc d'Enghien?" "It is true,

* This remark would appear a strange one, if the reader did not recollect that these Memoirs were written under the Restoration, when the words Emperor, Empire, and Bonaparte were no longer uttered in good society.—P. R.

Sire," I answered, "and I still bear it you. I believe you did yourself much harm by that act." "But are you aware that he was waiting at the frontier for me to be assassinated?" "Possibly, Sire; but he was not in France." "Ah! there is no harm in showing other countries, now and then, that one is the master." "There, Sire, do not let us speak of it, or you will make me cry." "Ah! tears! Woman's only weapon. That is like Josephine. She thinks she has carried her point when she begins to cry. Are not tears, M. de Rémusat, the strongest argument of women?" "Sire," replied my husband, "there are tears which cannot be censured."

"Ah! I perceive that you also take a serious view of the matter. But that is quite natural; you have seen other days, all of you, and you remember them. I date only from the day when I began to be somebody. What is a Duc d'Enghien to me? Only an *émigré*, somewhat more important than the others. But there was enough to make me strike hard. Those crack-brained Royalists had actually spread a report that I was to replace the Bourbons on the throne. The Jacobins became alarmed, and they sent Fouché to me to inquire into my intentions. Power has for the last two years fallen so naturally into my hands, that people may well have doubted sometimes

whether I had any serious intention of investing myself with it officially. I came to the conclusion that it was my duty to profit by this, in order to put a lawful end to the Revolution. The reason why I chose Empire rather than Dictatorship is because one becomes legitimate by taking up well-known ground. I began by trying to reconcile the two contending factions at the time of my accession to the Consulship. I thought that, in establishing order by means of permanent institutions, I should put an end to their enterprises; but factions are not to be put down so long as any fear of them is shown, and every attempt to conciliate them looks like fear. Besides, it may sometimes be possible to get the better of a sentiment; but of an opinion, never. I saw clearly that I could make no alliance between the two, but that I might make an alliance with both of them on my own account. The Concordat and the permissions to return have conciliated the *émigrés*, and I shall soon be completely reconciled with them; for you will see how the attractions of a Court will allure them. The mere phrases that recall former habits will win over the nobility, but the Jacobins are not men to be won by fair words. They require deeds. They were satisfied with my necessary severity when, after the 3rd Nivose,* at the very moment of a purely

* The epoch of the "infernal machine."

Royalist conspiracy, I transported a number of Jacobins. They might justly have complained if I had struck a weaker blow. You all thought I was becoming cruel and bloodthirsty, but you were wrong. I have no feelings of hatred—I am not capable of acting from revenge; I only sweep obstacles from my path, and, if it were expedient, you should see me pardon Georges Cadoudal to-morrow, although he came simply and solely to assassinate me.

"When people find that public tranquillity is the result of the event in question, they will no longer reproach me with it, and in a year's time this execution will be regarded as a great act of policy. It is true, however, that it has driven me to abridge the crisis. What I have just done I did not intend to do for two years yet. I meant to retain the Consulate, although words and things clash with one another under that form of government, and the signature I affixed to all the acts of my authority was the sign-manual of a continual falsehood. We should have got on nevertheless, France and I, because she has confidence in me, and what I will she wills.

"As, however, this particular conspiracy was meant to shake the whole of Europe, the Royalists and also Europe had to be undeceived. I had to choose between continuous persecution or one decisive blow; and my decision was not doubtful. I have for

ever silenced both Royalists and Jacobins. Only the Republicans remain—mere dreamers, who think a Republic can be made out of an old Monarchy, and that Europe would stand quietly by and let us found a federative government of twenty million men. The Republicans I shall not win, but they are few in number and not important. The rest of you Frenchmen like a Monarchy; it is the only Government that pleases you. I will wager that you, M. de Rémusat, are a hundred times more at your ease, now that you call me *Sire* and that I address you as *Monsieur?*"

As there was some truth in this remark, my husband laughed, and answered that certainly the sovereign power became his Majesty very well.

"The fact is," resumed the Emperor, good humouredly, "I believe I should not know how to obey. I recollect, at the time of the Treaty of Campo Formio, M. de Cobentzel and I met, in order to conclude it, in a room where, according to an Austrian custom, a dais had been erected and the throne of the Emperor of Austria was represented. On entering the room, I asked what that meant, and afterwards I said to the Austrian Minister, 'Now, before we begin, have that arm-chair removed, for I can never see one seat higher than the others without instantly wanting to place myself in it.' You see, I had an instinct of what was to happen *to me some* day.

"I have now acquired one great advantage for my government of France: neither she nor I deceive ourselves any longer. Talleyrand wanted me to make myself King—that is *the* word of his dictionary; but I will have no *grands seigneurs*, except those I make myself. Besides which, the title of King is worn out. Certain preconceived ideas are attached to it; it would make me a kind of heir, and I will be the heir of no one. The title that I bear is a grander one; it is still somewhat vague, and leaves room for the imagination. Here is a revolution brought to an end, and, I flatter myself, not harshly. Would you know why? Because no interests have been displaced, and many have been revived. That vanity of yours must always have breathing room; you would have been wearied to death with the dull sternness of a Republican Government. What caused the Revolution? Vanity. What will end it? Vanity again. Liberty is a pretext; equality is your hobby, and here are the people quite pleased with a king taken from the ranks of the soldiery. Men like the Abbé Siéyès," he added, laughing, "may inveigh against despotism, but my authority will always be popular. To-day I have the people and the army on my side; and with these a man would be a great fool who could not reign."

With these concluding words, Bonaparte rose,

Hitherto he had been very agreeable; his tone of voice, his countenance, his gestures, all were familiar and encouraging. He had been smiling, he had marked our answering smiles, and had even been amused by the remarks we made on his discourse; in fact, he had put us perfectly at our ease. But now, in a moment, his manner changed. He looked at us sternly, in a way that always seemed to increase his short stature, and gave M. de Rémusat some insignificant order in the curt tone of a despotic master, who takes care that every request shall be a command.

His tone of voice, so different from that to which I had been listening for the last hour, made me start, and when we withdrew, my husband, who had noticed my involuntary movement, told me that he had felt the same sensation. "You perceive," he said, "he was afraid that this momentary unbending and confidence might lessen the fear he is always anxious to inspire. He therefore thought proper to dismiss us with a reminder that he is the *master*." I never forgot this just observation, and more than once I have felt on how sound an appreciation of Bonaparte's character it was founded.

I have allowed myself to digress in relating this conversation and the reflections that preceded it, and must now return to the day on which

Bonaparte was made Emperor, and continue to depict the curious scenes of which I was an eye-witness.

I have already enumerated the guests whom Bonaparte invited to dine with him on that day. Just before dinner was announced, Duroc, the Governor of the Palace, informed each of us, severally, that the title of Prince was to be given to Joseph and also to Louis Bonaparte, and that of Princess to their wives. Mesdames Bacciochi and Murat were highly displeased at the distinction made between themselves and their sisters-in-law; and Madame Murat could hardly conceal her anger. At six o'clock the new Emperor made his appearance, and, with perfect ease and readiness, saluted each one present by his or her new title. Throughout the whole scene, which made a deep impression on me, I felt a presentiment. The early part of the day had been fine, and very hot; but about the time of the arrival of the Senate at Saint Cloud, the weather suddenly changed, the sky became overcast, thunder was heard, and for several hours a storm seemed impending. The dark and heavy atmosphere which enclosed the palace of Saint Cloud, struck me as an evil omen, and I could hardly conceal the depression I felt. The Emperor was in good spirits, and, I think, secretly enjoyed the slight confusion into which the new ceremonial threw us all. The Empress

was, as usual, gracious, unaffected, and easy; Joseph and Louis looked pleased; Madame Joseph appeared resigned to anything that might be required of her, Madame Louis was equally submissive; and Eugène Beauharnais, whom I cannot praise too highly in comparison with the others, was simple and natural, evidently free from any secret ambition or repining. This was not the case with Murat, the new-made Marshal; but his fear of his brother-in-law forced him to restrain himself, and he maintained a sullen silence. Madame Murat was excessively angry, and during the dinner had so little control over herself, that on hearing the Emperor address Madame Louis several times as "Princess," she could not restrain her tears. She drank several glasses of water in order to recover herself, and to appear to be taking something at the table, but her tears were not to be checked. Every one was embarrassed, and her brother smiled maliciously. For my own part, I was surprised, and even shocked, to see her pretty young face disfigured by emotion arising from so mean a passion as envy.

Madame Murat was then between twenty-two and twenty-three years of age; her dazzlingly white skin, her beautiful fair hair, the flowery wreath which decked it, the rose-coloured dress she wore, all contributed to give her a youthful and childlike appearance. The feelings she displayed contrasted

rudely with such charms. No one could pity her tears, and I think they impressed every one else as disagreeably as they impressed me.

Madame Bacciochi, who was older and had more command over herself, shed no tears; but her manner was abrupt and sarcastic, and she treated us all with marked haughtiness.

The Emperor became annoyed at last by his sisters' behaviour, and he aggravated their ill humour by indirect taunts, which wounded them very deeply. All that I witnessed during that eventful day gave me new notions of the effect which ambition produces on minds of a certain order; it was a spectacle of which I could have formed no previous conception.

On the following day, after a family dinner, a violent quarrel took place. I was not present; but we could hear something of it through the wall which divided the Empress's boudoir from our salon. Madame Murat burst into complaints, tears, and reproaches; she asked why she and her sisters were to be condemned to obscurity and contempt, while strangers were to be loaded with honours and dignity? Bonaparte answered her angrily, asserting several times that he was master, and would distribute honours as he pleased. It was on this occasion that he uttered the memorable remark, "Really, mesdames, to hear your preten-

sions, one would think we hold the crown from our father, the late King."

The Empress afterwards retailed the whole of this angry dispute to me. With all her kind-heartedness, she could not but enjoy the vexation of a person who so thoroughly disliked her. The discussion ended by Madame Murat's falling on the floor in a dead faint, overcome by her excessive anger, and by the acrimony of her brother's reproaches. At this, Bonaparte's wrath vanished, and when his sister recovered consciousness, he gave her some little encouragement. A few days later, after a consultation with M. de Talleyrand, Cambacérès, and others, it was arranged that titles of courtesy should be given to the sisters of the Emperor, and we learned from the *Moniteur* that they were to be addressed as "Imperial Highness."

Another vexation was, however, in store for Madame Murat and her husband. The private regulations of the palace of Saint Cloud divided the Imperial apartment into several reception-rooms, which could only be entered according to the newly-acquired rank of each person. The room nearest the Emperor's cabinet became the Throne-room, or Princes' room, and Marshal Murat, although the husband of a princess, was excluded from it. M. de Rémusat had the unpleasant task of refusing him admittance when he was about to pass in. Although

my husband was not responsible for the orders he had received, and executed them with scrupulous politeness, Murat was deeply offended by this public affront, and he and his wife, already prejudiced against us on account of our attachment to the Empress, henceforth honoured us both, if I may use the word, with a secret enmity, of which we have more than once experienced the effects. Madame Murat, however, who had tested her influence over her brother, was far from considering the case hopeless on this occasion, and, in fact, she eventually succeeded in raising her husband to the position she so eagerly desired for him.

The new code of precedence caused much disturbance in a Court which had hitherto been tolerably quiet. The struggles of contending vanity in the Imperial family were parodied in Madame Bonaparte's circle.

In addition to her four Ladies-in-Waiting, Madame Bonaparte was in the habit of receiving the wives of the various officers attached to the service of the First Consul. Besides these, Madame Maret was frequently invited—she lived permanently at Saint Cloud on account of her husband's position there — also Madame de la Valette, the Marquis de Beauharnais' daughter, whose misfortunes and conjugal devotion at the time of the sentence passed on her husband and

his escape, in 1815, are so well known. Her husband was of humble origin, but an able man, and of an amiable disposition. After having served some time in the army, he abandoned a mode of life unsuited to his tastes, and the First Consul, who had employed him on some diplomatic missions, had just then appointed him Counsellor of State. He evinced extreme devotion to all the Beauharnais, whose kinsman he had become. His wife was amiable and unpretending by nature, but it seemed as though vanity were henceforth to be the ruling passion in every one belonging to the Court, of both sexes and all ages.

An order from the Emperor which gave the Ladies-in-Waiting precedence, produced an outbreak of feminine jealousy. Madame Maret, a cold, proud personage, was annoyed that we should take precedence of her, and made common cause with Madame Murat, who fully shared her feelings. Besides this, M. de Talleyrand was no friend to Maret, and mercilessly ridiculed his absurdities, and as he was also on bad terms with Murat, he had become an object of dislike to both, and, consequently, a bond of union between the two. The Empress did not like anybody who was a friend of Madame Murat, and treated Madame Maret with some coldness; and although I never shared any of these feelings, and, for my own part, disliked nobody, I was included *in the general* enmity towards the Beauharnais.

One Sunday morning, the new Empress received orders to appear at Mass, attended only by her four Ladies-in-Waiting. Madame de la Valette, who had hitherto accompanied her aunt on all occasions, finding herself suddenly deprived of this privilege, burst into tears, and so we had to set about consoling the ambitious young lady. I observed all this with much amusement, preserving my serenity in these somewhat absurd dissensions, which were, nevertheless, natural enough. So much was it a matter of course for the inmates of the palace to live in a state of excitement, and to be in high or low spirits, according as their newborn projects of ambition were fulfilled or disappointed, that one day, when I was laughing heartily at some jest or other, one of Bonaparte's aides-de-camp asked me, in a low voice, whether I had been promised any new dignity? I could not help asking him, in return, whether he fancied that at Saint Cloud one must always be in tears, unless one was a princess?

Yet I had my own little ambition too, but it was moderate and easy to satisfy. The Emperor had made known to me through the Empress, and M. de Caulaincourt had repeated it to my husband, that, on the consolidation of his own fortunes, he would not forget those who had, from the first, devoted themselves to his service. Relying on this assurance, we

felt easy with regard to our future, and took no steps to render it secure. We were wrong, for every one else was actively at work. M. de Rémusat had always kept aloof from any kind of scheming; a defect in any man who lives at Court. Certain good qualities are absolutely a bar to advancement in the favour of sovereigns. They do not like to find generous feelings and philosophical opinions which are a mark of independence of mind, among their surroundings; and they think it still less pardonable that those who serve them should have any means of escaping from their power. Bonaparte, who was exacting in the kind of service he required, quickly perceived that M. de Rémusat would serve him faithfully, and yet would not bend to all his caprices. This discovery, together with some additional circumstances which I shall relate in their proper place, induced him to discard his obligations to him. He retained my husband near him; he made use of him to suit his own convenience; but he did not confer the same honours upon him which he bestowed on many others, because he knew that no favours would procure the compliance of a man who was incapable of sacrificing self-respect to ambition. The arts of a courtier were, besides, incompatible with M. de Résumat's tastes. He liked solitude, serious occupations, family life; every feeling of his heart was tender and pure; the use, or

rather the waste of his time, which was exclusively occupied in a continual and minute attention to the details of Court etiquette, was a source of constant regret to him. The Revolution having deprived him of his chosen calling, by removing him from the ranks of the magistracy, he thought it his duty to his children to accept the position which had offered itself, but the constant attention to important trifles to which he was condemned was wearisome, and he was only punctual when he ought to have been assiduous. Afterwards, when the veil fell from his eyes, and he saw Bonaparte as he really was, his generous spirit was roused to indignation, and close personal attendance on him became very irksome to my husband. Nothing is so fatal to the promotion of a courtier as his being actuated by conscientious scruples which he does not conceal. But, at the period of which I am speaking, these feelings of ours were still only vague, and I must repeat what I have already said—we believed the Emperor was in some measure indebted to us, and we relied on him.

The time soon came, however, when we lost some of our importance. People of rank equal to our own, and, soon afterwards, several of our superiors both in rank and fortune, begged to be allowed to form part of the Imperial Court; and thenceforth the services of those who were the first

to lead the way thither decreased in value. Bonaparte was highly delighted at his gradual conquest of the French nobility, and even Madame Bonaparte, who had far more feeling than he, had her head turned for a time by finding real *grandes dames* among her Ladies-in-Waiting. Wiser and more far-sighted persons than ourselves would have been more than ever attentive and assiduous in order to keep their footing, which was disputed in every direction by numbers full of their own importance; but, far from acting thus, we gave way to others. We regarded all this as an opportunity of partially regaining our freedom, and imprudently availed ourselves of it; and when, from any cause whatever, one loses ground at Court, it is rarely to be recovered.

M. de Talleyrand, who was urging Bonaparte to surround himself with all the prestige of royalty, advised him to gratify the vanity and pretension of those whom he wished to allure; and in France the nobility can be satisfied only by being placed in the front.

Those distinctions to which they thought themselves entitled had to be dangled before their eyes; the Montmorencys, the Montesquious, etc., were allured by the promise that from the day they cast in their lot with Bonaparte, they should resume all their former importance. In fact, it could not be otherwise, when the Emperor had once resolved on forming a regular Court.

Some persons have thought that Bonaparte would have done more wisely had he retained, when he adopted the new title of Emperor, some of the simplicity and austerity in externals which disappeared with the Consulate. A constitutional Government and a limited Court, displaying no luxury, and significant of the change which successive revolutions had wrought in people's ideas, might perhaps have been less pleasing to the national vanity, but it would have commanded more real respect. At the time of which I am speaking, the dignities to be conferred on those persons who were about the new sovereign were much discussed. Duroc requested M. de Rémusat to put his ideas on the subject in writing. He drew up a wise and moderate plan, but which was too simple for those secret projects which no one had then divined. "There is not sufficient display in it," said Bonaparte, as he read it; "all that would not throw dust in people's eyes." His object was to decoy, in order to deceive more effectually.

As he refused to give a free constitution to the French, he had to conciliate and fascinate them by every possible means; and there being always some littleness in pride, supreme power was not enough for him—he must have the appearance of it too; he must have etiquette, chamberlains, and so forth, which he believed would disguise the *parvenu*. He liked display; he leaned towards

a feudal system quite alien to the age in which he lived, but which nevertheless he intended to establish. It would, however, in all probability, have only lasted for the duration of his own reign.

It would be impossible to record all his notions on this subject. The following were some of them. "The French Empire," he would say, "will become the mother country of the other sovereignties of Europe. I intend that each of the kings shall be obliged to build a large palace for his own use in Paris; and that, on the coronation of the Emperor of the French, these kings shall come to Paris, and grace by their presence that imposing ceremony to which they will render homage." What did this project mean, except that he hoped to revive the feudal system, and to resuscitate a Charlemagne who, for his own advantage only, and to strengthen his own power, should avail himself of the despotic notions of a former era, and also of the experience of modern times?

Bonaparte frequently declared that he alone was the whole Revolution, and he at length persuaded himself that in his own person he preserved all of it which it would not be well to destroy.

A fever of etiquette seemed to have seized on the inhabitants of the Imperial palace of Saint Cloud. The ponderous regulations of Louis XIV. were taken down from the shelves in the library, and

extracts were commenced from them, in order that a code might be drawn up for the use of the new Court. Madame Bonaparte sent for Madame Campan, who had been First Bedchamber Woman to Marie Antoinette. She was a clever woman, and kept a school, where, as I have already mentioned, nearly all the young girls who appeared at Bonaparte's Court had been educated. She was questioned in detail as to the manners and customs of the last Queen of France, and I was appointed to write everything that she related from her dictation. Bonaparte added these very voluminous memoranda to those which were brought to him from all sides. M. de Talleyrand was consulted about everything. There was a continual coming and going; people were living in a kind of uncertainty which had its pleasing side, because every one hoped to rise higher. I must candidly confess that we all felt ourselves more or less elevated. Vanity is ingenious in its expectations, and our expectations were unlimited.

Sometimes it was disenchanting to observe the almost ridiculous effect that this agitation produced upon certain classes of society. Those who had nothing to do with our brand-new dignities said with Montaigne, "*Vengeons-nous par en médire.*" Jests more or less witty, and *calembours* more or less ingenious, were lavished on these new-made princes, and somewhat disturbed our brilliant

visions; but the number of those who dare to censure success is small, and flattery was much more common than criticism, at any rate in the circle under our observation.

Such, then, was the position of affairs at the close of the era which terminates here. The narrative of the second epoch will show what progress we all made (when I say "we all," I mean France and Europe) in this course of brilliant errors, which was destined to lead to the loss of our liberties and the obscuration of our true greatness for a long period.

In the April of that year, Bonaparte made his brother Louis a member of the Council of State, and Joseph colonel of the 4th Regiment of Infantry. "You must both belong to the civil and military service by turns," he told them. "You must not be strangers to anything that concerns the interests of the country."

CHAPTER VIII.

1801.

The trial of General Moreau—Condemnation of MM. de Polignac, de Rivière, etc.—Pardon of M. de Polignac—A letter from Louis XVIII.

THE creation of the Empire had turned public attention away from the proceedings against Moreau, which were, however, going on. The accused had been brought before the Tribunal several times; but the more the case was investigated, the less hope there was of the condemnation of Moreau, which became day by day an object of greater importance. I am perfectly convinced that the Emperor would not have allowed Moreau's life to be taken. That the general should be condemned and pardoned would have been sufficient for his purpose, which was to refute, by the sentence of the court, those who accused him of having acted with undue haste and personal animosity.

All who have brought cool observation to bear upon this important event are agreed in thinking that Moreau exhibited weakness and want of judgment. When he was brought up for examination,

he showed none of the dignity that was expected from him. He did not, like Georges Cadoudal, assume the attitude of a determined man, who openly avowed the lofty designs that had actuated him; neither did he assume that of an innocent man, full of righteous indignation at an unjust charge. He prevaricated in some of his answers, and the interest which he inspired was diminished by that fact; but even then Bonaparte gained nothing by this lessening enthusiasm, and not only party spirit, but reason itself, censured no less strongly than before a proceeding which was still attributed to personal enmity.

At length, on the 30th of May, the formal indictment (*acte d'accusation*) appeared in the *Moniteur*. It was accompanied by certain letters written by Moreau in 1795, before the 18th Fructidor, which proved that the general, being then convinced that Pichegru was corresponding with the princes, had denounced him to the Directory. A general and natural question then arose: why had Moreau acted so differently in the case of this second conspiracy, justifying himself by the statement that he had not thought it proper to the First Consul to reveal the secret of a plot in which he had refused to join?

On the 6th of June the examinations of all the accused persons were published. Among these there

were some who declared positively that the princes, in England, were quite confident that they might count upon Moreau; that it was with this hope Pichegru had gone to France, and that the two generals had subsequently on several occasions had interviews with Georges Cadoudal. They even asserted that Pichegru had evinced great dissatisfaction after these interviews, had complained that Moreau gave him only half-hearted support, and seemed anxious to profit on his own account by the blow which was to strike Bonaparte. A person named Bolland declared that Moreau had said, "The first thing to be done is to get rid of the First Consul."

Moreau, on being questioned in his turn, answered that Pichegru, when he was in England, had conveyed an inquiry to him as to whether he would assist him in case he should wish to return to France, and that he had promised to help him to carry out that project. It naturally occasioned no little astonishment that Pichegru, who had been denounced some years before by Moreau himself, should have applied to him to obtain the necessary permission; and Pichegru, in his examination, had denied that he ever did so. At the same time, however, he also denied that he had seen Moreau, although Moreau acknowledged that they had met, and he persisted in declaring that in coming to

France he had been actuated solely by his aversion to a foreign country, and his desire to return to his own. Shortly afterwards, Pichegru was found strangled in his prison, and the circumstances of his death have never been explained, nor have any comprehensible motives which could have rendered it necessary to himself been assigned.*

Moreau admitted that he had received Pichegru (who took him, he said, by surprise) at his house, but he declared at the same time that he had positively refused to enter into a scheme for the

* Here, as in the preceding chapter, the author is not sufficiently precise in relating the cause of the death of General Pichegru. The statement that he had committed suicide was received at the time with widespread incredulity, and the first result of the death of the Duc d'Enghien was that the Emperor was made to expiate that crime, by having others imputed to him which his most determined enemies would not previously have attributed to him. It is only common justice to Napoleon to record that his accusers have never been able to prove that it was for his interest in any way that the accused should not appear before his judges. M. Thiers has demonstrated that Pichegru's presence at the trial was necessary. The depositions of the accused of all parties were all equally condemnatory of him. His legal criminality was certain, and he could not fail to be condemned, and to deserve his condemnation. The man who was really to be feared was Moreau. It has, indeed, been said that a report made by experts established the impossibility of suicide under the circumstances, *i.e.* the use of a silk handkerchief, from which the body was found hanging. We must, however, bear in mind that legal medicine seventy years ago was a merely conjectural science, and that recent experience has proved suicide by strangulation to be easily and rapidly effected.

restoration of the House of Bourbon to the throne, because such a resolution would disturb the settlement of the national property; and he added, so far as his own personal pretensions were concerned, the notion was absurd, as it would have been necessary to their success that not only the First Consul, but the two other Consuls, the Governors of Paris, and the Guard, should be got rid of. He declared that he had seen Pichegru but once, although others of the accused asserted that several interviews had taken place between them; and he maintained this line of defence unshaken. He was, however, obliged to admit that he had discovered, at an advanced stage of the affair, that Frasnières, his private secretary, was deeply involved with the conspirators. Frasnières had fled on the first alarm.

Georges Cadoudal answered that his plan was to attack the First Consul, and remove him by force; that he had never entertained a doubt of finding, in Paris itself, a number of enemies of the actual *régime* who would aid him in his enterprise; and that he would have endeavoured by every means in his power to replace Louis XVIII. upon his throne. He steadily denied, however, that he knew either Pichegru or Moreau; and he terminated his replies with these words: "You have victims enough; I do not wish to augment their number."

Bonaparte seemed to be impressed by this firmness

of resolution, and said on that occasion, "If it were possible that I could spare any of these assassins, I should pardon Georges."

The Duc de Polignac replied that he had come to France secretly, with the sole purpose of ascertaining positively the state of public opinion, and what were the chances it afforded; but that when he perceived that an assassination was in question, he had thought only of getting away again, and would have left France if he had not been arrested.

M. de Rivière made a similar answer, and M. Jules de Polignac declared that he had merely followed his brother.

On the 10th of June, twenty of the accused persons were convicted and sentenced to death. At the head of the list were Georges Cadoudal and the Marquis de Rivière. The judgment went on to state that Jules de Polignac, Louis Méridan, Moreau, and Bolland were guilty of having taken part in the said conspiracy, but that it appeared from the "instruction" and the investigation that there were circumstances which rendered them excusable, and that the court therefore commuted the punishment which they had incurred to fine and imprisonment.

I was at Saint Cloud when the news of this finding of the court arrived. Every one was dumfounded. The Chief Judge had pledged himself to the First

Consul that Moreau should be condemned to death, and Bonaparte's discomfiture was so great that he was incapable of concealing it. It was widely known that, at his first public audience on the Sunday following, he displayed unmeasured anger towards Lecourbe (brother to the general of that name), the judge who had spoken strongly in favour of Moreau's innocence at the trial. He ordered Lecourbe out of his presence, calling him a "prevaricating judge"—an epithet whose signification nobody could guess; and shortly afterwards he deprived him of his judgeship.

I returned to Paris, much troubled by the state of things at Saint Cloud, and I found that among a certain party in the city the result of the trial was regarded with exultation which was nothing short of an insult to the Emperor. The nobility were much grieved by the condemnation of the Duc de Polignac.

I was with my mother and my husband, and we were deploring the melancholy results of these proceedings, and the numerous executions which were about to take place, when I was informed that the Duchesse de Polignac, and her aunt, Madame Daudlau, the daughter of Helvetius, whom I had often met in society, had come to visit me. They were ushered into the room, both in tears. The duchess, who was in an interesting situation,

enlisted my sympathies at once; she came to entreat me to procure an audience of the Emperor for her, that she might implore him to pardon her husband. She had no means of gaining admission to the palace of Saint Cloud, and she hoped I would assist her. M. de Rémusat and my mother were, like myself, fully alive to the difficulty of the enterprise, but we all three felt that I ought not to allow that difficulty to hinder me from making the attempt; and as we still had some days before us, because of the appeal against their sentence, which the condemned men had made, I arranged with the two ladies that they should go to Saint Cloud on the following day, while I was to precede them by a few hours, and induce Madame Bonaparte to receive them.

Accordingly, the next day I returned to Saint Cloud, and I had no difficulty in obtaining a promise from my good Empress that she would receive a person in so unhappy a position. But she did not conceal from me that she felt considerable dread of approaching the Emperor at a moment when he was so much displeased. "If," said she, "Moreau had been condemned, I should feel more hopeful of our success; but he is in such a rage that I am afraid he will turn us away, and be angry with you for what you are going to make me do."

I was too much moved by the tears and the

condition of Madame de Polignac to be influenced by such a consideration, and I did my best to make the Empress realize the impression which these sentences had produced in Paris. I reminded her of the death of the Duc d'Enghien, of Bonaparte's elevation to the Imperial throne in the midst of sanguinary punishments, and pointed out to her that the general alarm would be allayed by one act of clemency which might, at least, be quoted side by side with so many acts of severity.

While I was speaking to the Empress with all the warmth and earnestness of which I was capable, and with streaming tears, the Emperor suddenly entered the room from the terrace outside; this he frequently did of a morning, when he would leave his work, and come through the glass door into his wife's room for a little talk with her. He instantly perceived our agitation, and, although at another moment I should have been taken aback at his unlooked-for presence, the profound emotion which I felt overcame all other considerations, and I replied to his questions with a frank avowal of what I had ventured to do. The Empress, who was closely observing his countenance, seeing the severe look that overcast it, did not hesitate to come to my aid by telling him that she had already consented to receive Madame de Polignac.

The Emperor began by refusing to listen to us,

and complaining that we were putting him in for all the difficulty of a position which would give him the appearance of cruelty. "I will not see this woman," he said to me. "I cannot grant a pardon. You do not see that this Royalist party is full of young fools, who will begin again with this kind of thing, and go on with it, if they are not kept within bounds by a severe lesson. The Bourbons are credulous; they believe the assurances which they get from schemers who deceive them respecting the real state of the public mind of France, and they will send a lot of victims over here."

This answer did not stop me; I was extremely excited, partly by the event itself, and perhaps also by the risk of displeasing my formidable master. I would not be so cowardly in my own eyes as to retreat before any personal consideration, and that feeling made me bold and tenacious. I insisted so strongly, and entreated with such earnestness, that the Emperor, who was walking hurriedly about the room while I was speaking, suddenly paused opposite to me, and fixing a piercing gaze on me, said, "What personal interest do you take in these people? You are not excusable except they are your relatives."

"Sire," I answered, with all the firmness I could summon up; "I do not know them, and until yesterday I had never seen Madame de Polignac."

"What! And you thus plead the cause of people who came here to assassinate me?" "No, Sire; I plead the cause of an unfortunate woman who is in despair, and—I must say it—I plead your own cause too." And then, quite carried away by my feelings, I repeated all that I had said to the Empress. She was as much affected as myself, and warmly seconded me. But we could obtain nothing from the Emperor at that moment; he went angrily away, telling us not to "worry" him any more.

A few minutes afterwards I was informed that Madame de Polignac had arrived. The Empress received her in a private room, and promised that she would do everything in her power to obtain a pardon for the Duc de Polignac. During the course of that morning, certainly one of the most agitating I have ever lived through, the Empress went twice into her husband's cabinet, and twice had to leave it, repulsed. Each time she returned to me, quite disheartened, and I was losing hope and beginning to tremble at the prospect of having to take a refusal to Madame de Polignac as the final answer. At length we learned that M. de Talleyrand was with the Emperor, and I besought the Empress to make one last attempt, thinking that if M. de Talleyrand were a witness to it, he would endeavour to persuade Bonaparte. And, in fact, he did second the Empress at once and strongly, and at length Bonaparte,

vanquished by their supplications, consented to allow Madame de Polignac to appear before him. This was promising everything; it would have been impossible to utter a cruel "No!" in such a presence. Madame de Polignac was ushered into the cabinet, and fell fainting at the Emperor's feet. The Empress was in tears; the pardon of the Duc de Polignac was granted, and on the following day an article written by M. de Talleyrand gave a charming account of the scene, in what was then called the *Journal de l'Empire.*

M. de Talleyrand, on leaving the Emperor's cabinet, found me in the Empress' boudoir and related to me all that had occurred. He made me cry afresh, and he was far from being unmoved himself; but, nevertheless, he also made me laugh by his recital of an absurd little circumstance which had not escaped his keen perception of the ridiculous. Poor Madame Daudlau, who had accompanied her niece, and wanted to produce her own particular little effect, kept on repeating, in the midst of her efforts to revive Madame de Polignac—who was restored to consciousness with great difficulty—"Sire, I am the daughter of Helvetius!"

The Duc de Polignac's sentence was commuted to four years' imprisonment, to be followed by banishment. He was sent to join his brother, and after having been confined in a fortress, they were re-

moved to a civil prison, from whence they escaped during the campaign of 1814. The Duc de Rovigo (Fouché), who was then Minister of Police, was suspected of having connived at their escape, in order to curry favour with the party whose approaching triumph he foresaw.

I have no desire to make more of myself on this occasion than I strictly deserve, but I think it will be admitted that circumstances so fell out as to enable me to render a very substantial service to the Polignac family, one of which it would seem natural that they should have preserved some recollection. Since the return of the King to France, I have, however, been taught by experience, how effectually party spirit, especially among courtiers, effaces all sentiments of which it disapproves, no matter how just they may be.

After the incident which I have just related, I received a few visits from Madame de Polignac, who doubtless held herself bound to so much recognition of me; but, by degrees, as we lived in different circles, we lost sight of each other for some years, until the Restoration. At that epoch, the Duc de Polignac, having been sent by the King to Malmaison, to thank the Empress Josephine in his Majesty's name for her zealous efforts to save the life of the Duc d'Enghien, took advantage of the opportunity to express his own gratitude to

her at the same time. The Empress informed me of this visit, and said that no doubt the duke would also call on me; and I confess that I expected some polite recognition from him. I did not receive any; and, as it was not according to my notions to endeavour to arouse, by any words of mine, gratitude which could only be valuable by being voluntary, I remained quietly at home, and made no reference to an event which the persons concerned in it seemed to wish to forget, or at least to ignore.

One evening, chance brought me in contact with Madame de Polignac. It was at a reception at the house of the Duc d'Orléans, and in the midst of a great crowd. The Palais Royal was splendidly decorated, all the French nobility were assembled there, and the *grands seigneurs* and high-born gentlemen to whom the Restoration at first seemed to mean the restoration of their former rights, accosted each other with the easy, secure, and satisfied manner so readily resumed with success. Amid this brilliant crowd, I perceived the Duchesse de Polignac. After long years I found her again, restored to her rank, receiving all those congratulations which were due to her, surrounded by an adulatory crowd. I recalled the day on which I first saw her, the state she was then in, her tears, her terror, the way in which she came towards me when she entered my room, and almost fell at

my feet. I was deeply moved by this contrast, and being only a few paces from her, the interest with which she inspired me led me to approach her. I addressed her in a tone of voice which, no doubt, fully conveyed the really tender feeling of the moment, and congratulated her on the very different circumstances under which we met again. All I would have asked of her was a word of remembrance, in response to the emotion I felt on this impressive occasion.

This feeling was speedily chilled by the indifference and constraint with which she listened to what I said. She either did not recognize me, or she affected not to do so; I had to give my name. Her embarrassment increased. On perceiving this I immediately turned away, and with very painful feelings, for those which her presence had caused, and which I had thought, at first, she would share, were rudely dispelled.

The Empress' goodness in obtaining a remission of the capital sentence for M. de Polignac made a great sensation in Paris, and gave rise to renewed praise of her kindness of heart, which had obtained almost universal recognition. The wives, or mothers, or sisters of the other political offenders immediately besieged the palace of Saint Cloud, and endeavoured to obtain audience of the Empress, hoping to enlist her sympathy. Applications were also made to her

daughter, and they both obtained further pardons or commutations of sentence. The Emperor felt that a dark shadow would be cast on his accession to the throne by so many executions, and showed himself accessible to the petitions addressed to him.

His sisters, who were by no means included in the popularity of the Empress, and were anxious to obtain, if possible, some public favour for themselves, gave the wives of the condemned men to understand that they might apply to them also. They then took the petitioners in their own carriages to Saint Cloud, in a sort of semi-state, to entreat pardon for their husbands. These proceedings, as to which the Emperor, I believe, had been consulted beforehand, seemed less spontaneous than those of the Empress, indeed, bore signs of pre-arrangement; but at any rate they served to save the lives of several persons. Murat, who had excited universal indignation by his violent behaviour and by his hostility to Moreau, also tried to regain popularity by similar devices, and did in fact obtain a pardon for the Marquis de Rivière. On the same occasion he brought a letter from Georges Cadoudal to Bonaparte, which I heard read. It was a manly and outspoken letter, such as might be penned by a man who, being convinced that the deeds he has done, and which have proved his destruction, were dictated by a generous sense of duty and an unchangeable

resolution, is resigned to his fate. Bonaparte was deeply impressed by this letter, and again expressed his regret that he could not extend clemency to Georges Cadoudal.

This man, the real head of the conspiracy, died with unshaken courage. Twenty had been condemned to death; the capital sentence was, in the cases of seven, commuted to a more or less prolonged imprisonment. Their names are as follows: —The Duc de Polignac, the Marquis de Rivière, Russillon, Rochelle, D'Hozier, Lajollais, Guillard. The others were executed. General Moreau was taken to Bordeaux, and put on board a ship for the United States. His family sold their property by Imperial command; the Emperor bought a portion of it, and bestowed the estate of Grosbois on Marshal Berthier.

A few days later, the *Moniteur* published a protest from Louis XVIII. against the accession of Napoleon. It appeared on July 1st, 1804, but produced little effect. The Cadoudal conspiracy had weakened the faint sentiment of barely surviving allegiance to the old dynasty. The plot had, in fact, been so badly conceived; it seemed to be based on such total ignorance of the internal state of France, and of the opinions of the various parties in the country; the names and the characters of the conspirators inspired so little confidence; and, above all, the further

disturbances which must have resulted from any great change were so universally dreaded—that, with the exception of a small number of gentlemen whose interests would be served by the renewal of an abolished state of things, there was in France no regret for a result which served to strengthen the newly inaugurated system. Whether from conviction, or from a longing for repose, or from yielding to the sway of the great fortunes of the new Head of the State, many gave in their adhesion to his sovereignty, and from this time forth France assumed a peaceful and orderly attitude. The opposing factions became disheartened, and, as commonly happens when this is the case, each individual belonging to them made secret attempts to link his lot to the chances offered by a totally new system. Gentle and simple, Royalists and Liberals, all began to scheme for advancement. New ambitions and vanities were aroused, and favours solicited in every direction. Bonaparte beheld those on whom he could least have counted suing for the honour of serving him.

Meanwhile he was not in haste to choose from among them; he delayed a long time in order to feed their hopes, and to increase the number of aspirants. During this respite I left the Court, for a little breathing time in the country. I stayed for a month in the Valley of Montmorency, with Madame d'Houdetôt, of whom I have already spoken.

The quiet life I led in her house was refreshing aft
the anxieties and annoyances which I had recentl
had to endure almost uninterruptedly. I needed th
interval of rest; my health, which since that time h
always been more or less delicate, was beginning
fail, and my spirits were depressed by the new aspe
of events, and by discoveries I was slowly makin
about things in general, and certain great pe
sonages in particular. The gilded veil which,
Bonaparte used to say, hangs before the eyes
youth was beginning to lose its brightness, and
became aware of the fact with astonishment, whic
always causes more or less suffering, until tin
and experience have made us wiser and taught us
take things more easily.

CHAPTER IX.

1804.

Plans of invasion—An article in the *Moniteur*—The great officers of State—The Ladies-in-Waiting—The anniversary of July 14th—Beauty of the Empress—Projects of Divorce—Preparations for the Coronation.

By degrees, the flotillas, built in our other harbours, came round to join those of Boulogne. They sometimes met with obstacles on the way, for English vessels were always cruising about the coast to prevent their junction. The camps at Boulogne, at Montreuil, and at Compiègne presented an imposing appearance, and the army became daily more numerous and more formidable.

There is no doubt that these preparations for war, and the comments which were made upon them in Paris, created anxiety in Europe, for an article appeared in the newspapers which produced no great impression at the time, but which I consider worth recording, because it was an exact forecast of all that has since occurred.

It appeared in the *Moniteur* of July 10th, 1804,

on the same day with an account of the audience given by the Emperor to all the ambassadors who had just received fresh credentials to his Court. Some of the latter contained flattering expressions from foreign sovereigns on his accession to the throne.

This is the article :—

"From time immemorial, the metropolis has been the home of hearsay (*les on dit*). A new rumour springs up every day, to be contradicted on the next. Although there has been of late more activity, and a certain persistence in these reports which gratify idle curiosity, we think it more desirable to leave them to time, and that wisest of all possible replies, silence! . Besides, what sensible Frenchman, really interested in discovering the truth, will fail to recognize in the current rumours the offspring of malignity more or less interested in their circulation?

"In a country where so large a number of men are well aware of existing facts, and are able to judge of those which do not exist, if any one imagines that current rumours ought to cause him real anxiety, if a credulous confidence in them influences his commercial enterprises or his personal interests, either his error is not a lasting one, or he must lay the blame on his own want of reflection.

"But foreigners, persons attached to diplomatic missions, not having the same means of judging, nor

the same knowledge of the country, are often deceived, and although for a long time past they have had opportunities of observing how invariably every event gives the lie to current gossip, they nevertheless repeat it in foreign countries, and thus give rise to most erroneous notions about France. We therefore think it advisable to say a few words in this journal on the subject of political gossip.

"*It is said* that the Emperor is about to unite the Italian Republic, the Ligurian Republic, the Republic of Lucca, the Kingdom of Etruria, the Papal States, and, by a necessary consequence, Naples and Sicily, under his own rule. *It is said* that the same fate is reserved for Switzerland and Holland; *it is said* that by annexing Hanover, the Emperor will be enabled to become a member of the Germanic Confederation.

"Many deductions are drawn from these suppositions; and the first we remark is that the Pope will abdicate, and that Cardinal Fesch or Cardinal Ruffo will be raised to the Pontifical Throne.

"We have already said, and we repeat it, that if the influence of France were to be exerted in any changes affecting the Sovereign Pontiff, it would be exerted for the welfare of the Holy Father, and to increase the respect due to the Holy See and its possessions, rather than to diminish it.

"As to the kingdom of Naples, Mr. Acton's

aggressive action and his constantly hostile policy might in former times have afforded France a legitimate cause of war, which she would never have undertaken with the intention of uniting the Two Sicilies to the French Empire.

"The Italian and Ligurian Republics and the kingdom of Etruria will not cease to exist as independent States, and it is surely very unlikely that the Emperor would disown the duties attached to the authority which he derives from the comitia of Lyons, and also the personal glory he has acquired by twice restoring to independence the States which twice he has conquered.

"We may ask, as regards Switzerland, who prevented its annexation to France, before the Act of Mediation? This Act, the immediate result of care and thought on the part of the Emperor, has restored tranquillity to its people, and is also a guarantee of their independence and security, so long as they themselves do not destroy this guarantee by substituting the will of one of their constituent corporations, or that of a party, for the elements of which it is composed.

"Had France desired to annex Holland, Holland would now be French, like Belgium. That she is an independent Power is because France felt, with regard to that country, as she felt in the case of Switzerland, that the localities required an indi-

vidual existence and a special kind of organization.

"A still more absurd supposition is entertained respecting Hanover. The annexation of that province would be the most fatal gift that could be made to France, and no lengthened consideration of the matter is needed in order to perceive this. Hanover would become a cause of rivalry between the French nation and that prince who was the ally and friend of France, at a time when all Europe was in coalition against her.

"In order to retain Hanover, it would be necessary to keep up a military force, at a cost out of all proportion to the few millions which constitute the whole of the revenues of that country. Will that Government which has made sacrifices in order to maintain the principle that only a simple and continuous frontier-line, so far as the fortifications of Strasbourg and of Mayence on the right bank, is necessary, be so shortsighted as to wish for the incorporation of Hanover? But, it is said, the advantage of belonging to the Germanic Confederation depends on the possession of Hanover.

"The mere title of Emperor of the French is sufficient answer to this singular idea. The Germanic Confederation is composed of kings, electors, and princes, and it recognizes, in relation to itself, but one Imperial dignity. It would be to mis-

judge the noble pride of our country to suppose she would ever consent to become an element in any other confederation, even had such a thing been compatible with national dignity. What could have prevented France from maintaining her rights in the circle of Burgundy, or those which conferred on her the possession of the Palatinate?

"We may even ask, with pardonable pride, who was it that prevented France from keeping part of the States of Baden and of the Swabian territory?

"No, France will never cross the Rhine! Nor will her armies pass over it, unless it become necessary for her to protect the German Empire and its princes, who inspire an interest in her because of their attachment to her, and their value in the balance of power in Europe.

"If these are simply idle rumours, we have answered them sufficiently. If they owe their origin to the anxious jealousy of foreign Powers, who are always crying out that France is ambitious in order to cloak their own ambition, there is another answer to be made. Owing to the two coalitions successively entered into against us, and to the treaties of Campo Formio and Luneville, France has no province for her neighbour which she could wish to annex; and if in the past she has displayed an example of moderation unexampled in modern history, the result is an advantage for her, inasmuch as she need not henceforth take up arms.

"Her capital is in the centre of her Empire; her frontiers are bounded by small States which complete her political constitution; geographically she can desire nothing belonging to her neighbours —she is therefore naturally inimical to none; and as there exists in her respect neither another Finland, nor another River Inn, she is in a position which no other Power enjoys.

"As it is with those rumours which try to prove that France is inordinately ambitious, so it is with others of a different nature.

"Not long ago, rebellion was in our camps. Two days back, thirty thousand Frenchmen had refused to embark at Boulogne; yesterday our legions were at war with each other, ten against ten, thirty against thirty, flag against flag. Our four Rhenish departments were informed that we were about to restore them to their former ruler. To-day, perhaps, *it is said* that the Public Treasury is empty, that the public works have been discontinued, that discord prevails everywhere, and that the taxes are unpaid. If the Emperor starts for the camps it will be said, perhaps, that he is hurrying thither to restore peace. In fact, whether he remains at St. Cloud, or goes to the Tuileries, or lives at Malmaison, there will be opportunities for absurd reports.

"And if these rumours, simultaneously spread

about in foreign countries, were intended to cause alarm on account of the ambition of the Emperor, and at the same time to encourage any unbecoming and mistaken acts, by leading people to hope that his Government is weak, we can but repeat those words which a Minister was instructed to utter on leaving a certain Court: 'The Emperor of the French desires war with no one, whomsoever he may be; he dreads war with no one. He does not meddle with his neighbours' business, and he has a right to similar treatment. He has always manifested a wish for a durable peace, but the history of his life does not justify us in thinking that he will suffer himself to be insulted or despised.'

After a refreshing sojourn in the country, I came back once more to the whirl of Court life, where the fever of vanity seemed every day to lay stronger hold of us.

The Emperor now appointed the great officers of the Household. General Duroc was made Grand Marshal of the Palace; Berthier, Master of the Hunt (*Grand Veneur*); M. de Talleyrand, Grand Chamberlain; Cardinal Fesch, Grand Almoner; M. de Caulaincourt, Grand Equerry; and M. de Ségur, Grand Master of the Ceremonies. M. de Rémusat received the title of First Chamberlain. He ranked immediately next to M. de Talleyrand, who would be chiefly occupied by foreign affairs, and was to depute my

husband to do the greater part of his duties. The matter was thus arranged at first; but soon after, the Emperor appointed Chamberlains in Ordinary. Among these were the Baron de Talleyrand (a nephew of the Grand Chamberlain), some senators, some Belgian gentlemen of high birth, and, a little later, some French gentlemen also.

With these appointments began contests as to precedence, and discontent on account of distinctions which were coveted and withheld. M. de Rémusat found himself exposed to continual envy, and as it were at war with these personages. I am now ashamed when I recall the annoyance which all this caused me; but in whatever Court one lives—and ours had become a very real one—it is impossible not to attach importance to the trifles of which life is composed. An honourable and sensible man is often ashamed in his own eyes of the pleasure or annoyance which he experiences in the profession of a courtier, and yet he can scarcely avoid either the one or the other. A ribbon, a slight difference in dress, permission to pass through a particular door, the *entrée* to such or such a salon—these are the pitiful causes of a constantly recurring vexation. In vain do we try to harden ourselves against them. The importance in which they are held by a great number of persons, obliges us, in spite of ourselves, to prize them. In vain do sense and reason rebel

against such a use of human faculties; however dissatisfied we may feel with ourselves, we must needs become as small-minded as everybody else, and either fly the Court altogether, or consent to take the follies, that fill the very air we breathe, seriously.

The Emperor added to the difficulties inseparable from the regulations of a palace those of his own temper. He enforced etiquette with the strictness of martial law. Ceremonies were gone through as though by beat of drum; everything was done at double-quick time; and the perpetual hurry, the constant fear that Bonaparte inspired, added to the unfamiliarity of a good half of his courtiers with formalities of the kind, rendered the Court dull rather than dignified. Every countenance wore an expression of uneasiness and solicitude in the midst of all the magnificence with which his ostentatious tastes led the Emperor to surround himself.

Madame de la Rochefoucauld, who was the Empress's cousin, was appointed her Lady of Honour, and Madame de la Fayette Lady of the Bedchamber. Twelve Ladies-in-Waiting were nominated, and by degrees the number of these was augmented. Many great ladies from different parts of the country were included in the list, persons who were much surprised at finding themselves in each other's society. Without entering into any details here, which would

now serve no good purpose, I may mention that applications were made by many persons who now affect ardent royalism, hardly compatible with the opinions they then professed. It ought to be frankly admitted that all classes wanted to have their share of these new creations, and I could point to several persons who, after having blamed me because I came to the First Consul's Court in consequence of an old friendship, spared no efforts on their own parts to obtain places at that of the Emperor, from ambitious motives.

As for the Empress, she was delighted to find herself surrounded by a numerous suite, and one so gratifying to her vanity. The victory she had won over Madame de la Rochefoucauld by attaching her to her person, the pleasure of reckoning M. D'Aubusson de la Feuillade among her Chamberlains, Madame d'Arberg de Ségur and the Maréchales among her Ladies-in-Waiting, intoxicated her a little; but I must admit that this essentially feminine feeling deprived her of none of her accustomed grace and kindliness. The Empress always knew perfectly well how to preserve the supremacy of her own rank, while showing polite deference towards those men or women who enhanced the splendour of her Court by their personal distinction.

At this time, the "Ministry of General Police" was reconstructed, and Fouché was once more *place at its* head.

The 18th Brûmaire was the date at first fixed for the coronation; and in the mean time, to show that the revolutionary epochs were not to be disregarded, the Emperor repaired in great pomp to the Invalides on the 14th of July, and, after having heard Mass, distributed the Cross of the Legion of Honour to a number of persons selected from all classes comprised in the Government, the army, and the Court. I must not omit to record that on this occasion the Empress looked young and lovely, among all the youthful and handsome women by whom she was surrounded for the first time in public. Her costume was admirably selected, and in perfect taste. The ceremony took place under burning sunshine. She appeared in broad daylight, attired in a robe of rose-coloured tulle, spangled with silver stars, and cut very low, according to the fashion of the day. Her head-dress consisted of a great number of diamond wheat-ears, and this brilliant attire, the elegance of her bearing, the charm of her smile, the sweetness of her countenance, produced such an effect, that I heard many persons who were present at the ceremony say that the Empress outshone all the ladies of her suite.

A few days afterwards the Emperor set out for the camp at Boulogne, and if public rumour was to be believed, the English began to feel really alarmed at the prospect of an invasion.

He passed more than a month in inspecting the coasts and reviewing the troops in the various camps. The army was at that time numerous, flourishing, and animated by the best spirit. He was present at several engagements between the vessels which were blockading us and our flotillas, which by this time had assumed a formidable aspect.

While engaged in these military occupations, he fixed, by several decrees, the precedence and the rank of the various authorities which he had created; for his mind embraced every topic at once. He had already formed a private intention of asking the Pope to crown him, and, with a view to this, he neglected neither that address by which he might amicably carry his point, nor certain measures by which he might be able to render a refusal exceedingly difficult. He sent the Cross of the Legion of Honour to Cardinal Caprara, the Pope's legate, and accompanied the distinction by words equally flattering to the Sovereign Pontiff and promising for the re-establishment of religion. These fine phrases appeared in the *Moniteur*. Nevertheless, when he communicated to the Council of State his project of confirming his elevation by so solemn a religious ceremony, he had to encounter determined opposition from certain of his councillors. Treilhard, among others, resisted the proposal strongly. The Emperor allowed him to speak, and then replied, "You do not know

the ground we are standing on so well as I know it. Let me tell you that religion has lost much less of its power than you think. You do not know all that I effect by means of the priests whom I have gained over. There are thirty departments in France sufficiently religious to make me very glad that I am not obliged to dispute with the Pope for power in them. It is only by committing every other authority in succession, that I shall secure my own, that is to say, the authority of the Revolution, which we all wish to consolidate."

While the Emperor was inspecting the ports, the Empress went to Aix-la-Chapelle to drink the waters. She was accompanied by some of her new household, and M. de Rémusat was ordered to follow her, and to await the Emperor, who was to rejoin her at Aix. I was glad of this respite. I could not disguise from myself that so many new-comers were effacing by degrees her first estimate of my value to her, which had owed much to the non-existence of comparisons; and although I was yet young in experience of the world, I felt that a short absence would be useful, and that I should afterwards take, if not the first place, that of my choice, and hold it throughout securely.

Madame de la Rochefoucauld, who attended the Empress, was then a woman of between thirty-six

and forty years old, short and ill-made, with a striking countenance, but only ordinary abilities. She had a great deal of assurance, like most plain women who have had some success notwithstanding their defects. She was very lively, and not at all ill natured. She proclaimed her adherence to all the opinions of those who were called "aristocrats" by the Revolution, and as she would have been puzzled to reconcile those views with her present position, she made up her mind to laugh at them, and would jest about herself with the utmost good humour. The Emperor liked her because she was quick, frivolous, and incapable of scheming. Indeed, no Court in which women were so numerous ever offered less opportunity for any kind of intrigue. Affairs of State were absolutely confined to the cabinet of the Emperor only; we were ignorant of them, and we knew that nobody could meddle with them. The few persons in whom the Emperor confided were wholly devoted to the execution of his will, and absolutely unapproachable. Duroc, Savary, and Maret never allowed an unnecessary word to escape them, confining themselves strictly to communicating to us without delay such orders as they received. We were in their sight and in our own mere machines, simply and solely doing those things which we were ordered to do, and of about as much importance as the elegant articles of new furniture with

which the palaces of the Tuileries and Saint Cloud were now profusely adorned.

I remarked at this time with some amusement, that as by degrees the *grands seigneurs* of former days came to Court, they all experienced, no matter how widely their characters differed, a certain sense of disappointment curious to observe. At first—when they breathed once more the air of palaces; found themselves again among their former associates, and in the atmosphere of their youth; beheld anew decorations, throne-rooms, and Court costumes, and heard the forms of speech habitual in royal dwellings—they yielded to the delightful illusion. They fondly believed that they might conduct themselves as they had been accustomed to do in those same palaces, where all but the master remained unchanged. But a harsh word, a peremptory order, the pressure of an arbitrary will, soon reminded them roughly that everything was new in this unique Court. Then it was strange to see how, despite all their efforts, they lost their presence of mind, feeling the ground uncertain under their feet, and became constrained and uneasy in all their futile little ways. They were too vain or too weak to substitute a grave bearing, unlike the manners of their past, for their former customs, and they did not know what course to adopt. The arts of the courtier availed nothing with

Bonaparte, and so profited them not at all. It was not safe to remain a man in his presence—that is to say, to preserve the use of one's intellectual faculties; it was easier and quicker for everybody, or nearly everybody, to assume the attitude of servility. If I chose I could tell exactly the individuals to whom such a course came most readily; but if I were to go more at length into this subject, I should give my Memoirs the colour of a satire, which is neither according to my taste nor my intention.

While the Emperor was at Boulogne, he sent his brother Joseph to Paris, where all the governing bodies presented addresses to him and his wife. Thus, he assigned each person his own place, and dictated supremacy to some and servitude to others. On the 3rd of September, he rejoined his wife at Aix-la-Chapelle, and remained there some days, holding a brilliant Court and receiving the German Princes. During this sojourn, M. de Rémusat was directed to send to Paris for the company of the second theatre, then managed by Picard, and several fêtes were given to the Electors, which, although they did not approach the magnificence of later occasions, were very splendid. The Elector Arch-Chancellor of the Germanic Empire, and the Elector of Baden, paid assiduous court to our sovereigns. The Emperor and Empress visited Cologne, and

ascended the Rhine as far as Mayence, where they were met by a crowd of Princes and distinguished foreigners. This excursion lasted until the month of October.

On the 14th, Madame Louis Bonaparte gave birth to a second son.* This event was a great source of happiness to the Empress. She believed that it would have a most favourable effect upon her future; and yet at that very moment a new plot was being formed against her, which she only succeeded in defeating after much effort and mental suffering. Bonaparte arrived in Paris a few days later.

Ever since we had learned that the Pope would come to Paris for the coronation of the Emperor, the Bonaparte family had been exceedingly anxious to prevent Madame Bonaparte from having a personal share in the ceremony. The jealousy of our Princesses was strongly excited on this point. It seemed to them that such an honour would place too great a distance between themselves and their sister-in-law, and, besides, dislike needs no motive of interest personal to itself to make anything which is a gratification to its object distasteful. The Empress ardently longed for her coronation, which she believed

* The second son of Queen Hortense was Napoleon Louis. This Prince died suddenly during the insurrection of the Pontifical States against the Pope, in which he took part. The third son of the Queen, Napoleon III., was born on the 20th of April, 1808.

would establish her rank and her security, and the silence of her husband alarmed her. He appeared to be hesitating, and Joseph spared no argument to induce him to make his wife merely a witness of the ceremony. He even went so far as to revive the question of the divorce, advising Bonaparte to profit by the approaching event to decide upon it. He pointed out the advantage of an alliance with some foreign Princess, or at least with the heiress of a great name in France, and dwelt upon the chance that such a marriage would give him of a direct heir. Joseph spoke with the more likelihood of being listened to, because he insisted strongly on the personal disinterestedness of advice which, if taken, might remove himself from all chance of the succession. The Emperor, incessantly harassed by his family, appeared to be impressed by his brother's arguments, and a few words which escaped him threw his wife into extreme distress. Her former habit of confiding all her troubles to me now led her to restore me to her confidence. I was exceedingly puzzled how to advise her, and not a little afraid of committing myself in so serious a matter. An unexpected incident was near bringing about the very thing which we dreaded.

For some time Madame Bonaparte had perceived an increase of intimacy between her husband and Madame de ——. In vain did I entreat her not to

furnish the Emperor with a pretext for a quarrel, which would be made use of against her. She was too full of her grievance to be prudent, and, in spite of my warning, she watched for an opportunity of confirming her suspicions. At Saint Cloud the Emperor occupied the apartment which opens upon the garden, and is on the same level. Above this apartment was a small suite of rooms communicating with his own by a back staircase; these he had recently had furnished, and the Empress strongly suspected the purpose of this mysterious retreat. One morning, when there were several persons in her drawing-room, the Empress, seeing Madame de —— (who was then resident at Saint Cloud) leave the room, suddenly rose a few minutes afterwards, and taking me apart into a window, said, "I am going to clear up my doubts this very moment; stay here with all these people, and if you are asked where I have gone, say that the Emperor sent for me." I tried to restrain her, but she was quite ungovernable, and would not listen to me. She went out at the same moment, and I remained, excessively apprehensive of what might be going to happen. In about half an hour the Empress re-entered the room by the opposite door. She seemed exceedingly agitated, and almost unable to control herself, but took her seat before an embroidery frame. I remained at a distance from her, apparently occupied

by my needlework, and avoiding her eye, but I could easily perceive her agitation by the abruptness of all her movements, which were generally slow and soft. At last, as she was incapable of keeping silence under strong emotion of any kind, she could no longer endure this constraint, and calling to me in a loud voice, she bade me follow her. When we had reached her bedroom, she said, "All is lost. It is but too true. I went to look for the Emperor in his cabinet, and he was not there; then I went up the back stairs into the upper room. I found the door shut, but I could hear Bonaparte's voice, and also that of Madame de ——. I knocked loudly at the door, and called out that I was there. You may imagine the start I gave them. It was some time before the door was opened; and when at last I was admitted, though I know I ought to have been able to control myself, it was impossible, and I reproached them bitterly. Madame de —— began to cry, and Bonaparte flew into so violent a passion, that I had hardly time to fly before him and escape his rage. I am still trembling at the thought of it; I did not know to what excess his anger might have gone. No doubt, he will soon come here, and I may expect a terrible scene." The emotion of the Empress moved me deeply. "Do not," said I, "commit a second fault, for the Emperor will never forgive you for having admitted any one, no matter

whom, to your confidence. Let me leave you, Madame. You must wait for him; let him find you alone." I returned at once to the drawing-room, when I found Madame de ——. She glanced at me nervously; she was extremely pale, talked almost incoherently, and tried hard to find out whether I knew what had passed. I resumed my work as tranquilly as I could, but I think Madame de ——, having seen me leave the room, must have known that the Empress had told me. Every one was looking at every one else, and nobody could make out what was happening.

A few minutes afterwards, we heard a great noise in the apartment of the Empress, and of course I knew that the Emperor was there, and that a violent quarrel was taking place. Madame de —— called for her carriage, and at once left for Paris. This sudden departure was not likely to mend matters. I was to go to Paris in the evening; and before I left Saint Cloud the Empress sent for me, and told me, with tears, that Bonaparte, after having insulted her in every possible way, and smashed some of the furniture in his rage, had signified to her that she was at once to quit Saint Cloud. He declared that, weary of her jealous spying, he was determined to shake off such a yoke, and to listen henceforth only to the counsels of his policy, which demanded that he should take a wife capable of giving him children.

She added that he had sent orders to Eugène de Beauharnais to come to Saint Cloud in order to make arrangements for the departure of his mother, and she added that she was now lost beyond redemption. She then directed me to go and see her daughter in Paris on the following day, and to inform her exactly of all that had occurred.

Accordingly, I went to Madame Louis Bonaparte. She had just seen her brother, who had come from Saint Cloud. The Emperor had signified to him his resolution to divorce his wife, and Eugène had received the communication with his accustomed submission, but refused all the personal favours which were offered to him as a consolation, declaring that from the moment such a misfortune should fall upon his mother, he would accept nothing, but that he would follow her to any retreat which might be assigned to her, were it even at Martinique, as he was resolved to sacrifice all to her great need of comfort. Bonaparte had appeared to be deeply impressed by this generous resolution; he had listened to all that Eugène said in unbroken silence.

I found Madame Louis less affected by this event than I expected. "I cannot interfere in any way," she said. "My husband has positively forbidden me to do so. My mother has been very imprudent. She is about to forfeit a crown, but, at any rate, she will have peace. Ah! believe me, there are women

more unhappy than she." She spoke with such profound sadness that I could not fail to read her thoughts; but, as she never allowed a word to be said about her own personal position, I did not venture to reply in such a way as would make it evident that I had understood her. "And, besides," said she in conclusion, "if there be any chance at all of setting this matter right, it is the influence over Bonaparte of my mother's tears and her gentleness. Believe me, it is better to leave them to themselves—not to interfere at all between them—and I strongly advise you not to return to Saint Cloud, especially as Madame N—— has mentioned you, and believes that you would give hostile advice."

I remained away from Saint Cloud for two days, in accordance with the advice of Madame Louis Bonaparte, but on the third I rejoined my Empress. concerning whom I felt the deepest solicitude. I found her relieved from one pressing trouble. Her submission and her tears had, in fact, disarmed Bonaparte; his anger and its cause were no longer in question. A tender reconciliation had taken place between them; but, immediately afterwards, the Emperor threw his wife into fresh agitation by letting her see that he was now seriously entertaining the idea of a divorce. "I have not the courage," he said to her "to come to a final

resolution; and if you let me see that you are too deeply afflicted—if you can render me obedience only —I feel that I shall never have the strength to oblige you to leave me. I tell you plainly, however, that it is my earnest desire that you should resign yourself to the interests of my policy, and yourself spare me all the difficulties of this painful separation." The Empress told me that he wept bitterly while uttering these terrible words. I remember well how, as I listened to her, I conceived in my mind the plan of a great and generous sacrifice which she might make to France.

Believing, as I then believed, that the fate of the nation was irrevocably united with that of Napoleon, I thought there would be true greatness of soul in devoting one's self to all that might secure and confirm that destiny. I thought, had I been the woman to whom such a representation had been made, that I should have had courage to abandon the brilliant position which, after all, was grudged to me, and retire into a peaceful solitude, satisfied with the sacrifice that I had made. But when I saw in Madame Bonaparte's face what suffering the Emperor's words had caused her, I remembered a saying of my mother's, that advice to be useful must be adapted to the character of the person to whom it is offered, and I refrained from uttering the lofty sentiments of which my mind was full. I

bethought me in time of the dread with which the Empress would contemplate retirement, of her taste for luxury and display, and of the devouring *ennui* to which she would inevitably fall a prey when she had broken with the world; and I confined myself to saying that I saw only two alternatives for her. The first of these was to sacrifice herself bravely and with dignity; in which case she ought to go to Malmaison on the following morning, and from thence to write to the Emperor, declaring that she restored his freedom to him; or to remain where she was, acknowledging herself to be unable to decide upon her own fate, and, though always ready to obey, positively determined to await his direct orders before she should descend from the throne on which he had placed her.

She adopted the second alternative. Assuming the attitude of a resigned and submissive victim, she excited the jealous anger of all the Bonapartes by her gentle demeanour. Yielding, sad, considerate of everybody, entirely obedient, but also skilful in availing herself of her ascendancy over her husband, she reduced him to a condition of agitation and indecision from which he could not escape.

At length, one memorable evening, after long hesitation, during which the Empress suffered mortal anguish and suspense, the Emperor told her that the Pope was about to arrive in Paris, that

he would crown them both, and that she had better at once begin to prepare for the great ceremony. It is easy to picture to one's fancy the joy with which such a termination to all her misery filled the heart of the Empress, and also the discomfiture of the Bonapartes, especially Joseph; for the Emperor had not failed to acquaint his wife, according to his usual custom, with the attempts that had been made to induce him to decide on a divorce, and it is only reasonable to suppose that these revelations increased the ill feeling already existing on both sides.

On this occasion the Empress confided to me the ardent desire she had long felt to have her marriage, which had been civilly contracted, confirmed by a religious ceremony. She said that she had sometimes spoken of this to the Emperor, and, although he had not evinced any repugnance, he had objected that, even if a priest were brought into the palace to perform the religious rite, it could not be done with sufficient secrecy to conceal the fact that until then they had not been married according to the Church. Either that was his real reason, or he wanted to hold this means of breaking his marriage in reserve for future use, should he consider it really advisable to do so; at any rate, he had rejected his wife's pleading firmly, but mildly. She therefore determined to await the arrival of

the Pope, being persuaded, very reasonably, that his Holiness would espouse her cause on such a point as this.

The entire Court was now occupied in preparations for the ceremony of the coronation. The Empress was continually surrounded by all the best artists in millinery in Paris, and the vendors of the most fashionable wares. With their assistance she decided on the new form of Court dress, and on her own costume. As may be supposed, there was no thought of resuming the hoop worn under the old *régime*; it was merely proposed that to our ordinary garments the long mantle (which, after the return of the King, was still worn) should be added, and also a very becoming ruff of blonde, which was attached to the shoulders and came high up at the back of the head, as we see it in portraits of Catherine de Medicis. The use of this ruff was afterwards discontinued, although it was, in my opinion, very pretty, and lent dignity and grace to the whole costume. The Empress already possessed diamonds of considerable value, but the Emperor not only made costly additions to her jewel-case, but also placed the diamonds belonging to the National Treasury in her hands, and desired that she should wear them on the great day. A diadem of brilliants, above which the Emperor was with his own hands to place the closed crown upon her head,

was made for her, and the ceremony was privately rehearsed. David, who afterwards painted the great picture of the coronation of the Emperor and Empress, attended these rehearsals, and arranged the positions of each. The coronation of the Emperor had been eagerly discussed. The first idea was that the Pope should place the diadem upon the head of the Emperor; but Bonaparte refused to receive the crown from any hand but his own, and uttered, on that occasion, the sentence which Madame de Staël has quoted in her work: "I found the crown of France upon the ground, and took it up."

At length, after a great deal of discussion, it was arranged that the Emperor was to crown himself, and that the Pope should only give his benediction. Everything was done to make the fêtes brilliant and popular, and people began to flock into Paris. Considerable bodies of troops were ordered up to the capital; all the chief authorities of the provinces were invited; the Arch-Chancellor of the Germanic Empire and a great number of foreigners arrived. Party spirit slumbered for the time being, and the whole city gave itself up to the excitement and curiosity of so novel an incident, and a spectacle which would doubtless be magnificent. The shopkeepers drove a thriving trade; workmen of all kinds were employed, and rejoiced in the occasion that procured them such a stroke of luck; the popu-

lation of the city seemed to be doubled; commerce, public establishments, and theatres profited by the occasion, and all was bustle and activity.

The poets were requested to celebrate this great event. Chénier was ordered to compose a tragedy, for the perpetual commemoration of it, and he took Cyrus for his hero. The Opera was to give splendid ballets. To us dwellers in the palace, money was given for our expenses, and the Empress presented each of her Ladies-in-Waiting with handsome diamond ornaments. The Court dress of the gentlemen about the Emperor was also regulated. This becoming costume consisted of the French coat, in different colours for those who belonged to the department of the Grand Marshal, the Grand Chamberlain, and the Grand Equerry respectively; silver embroidery for all; a cloak of velvet lined with satin, worn over one shoulder; a sash, a lace cravat, and a hat turned up in front, with a white plume. The Princes were to wear white coats embroidered in gold; the Emperor was to wear a long robe somewhat resembling that worn by our kings, a mantle of purple velvet sewn with golden bees, and his crown—a golden wreath of laurels like that of the Cæsars.

It seems like a dream, or a story from the "Arabian Nights," when I recall the luxury that was displayed at that period, the perpetual disputes

about precedence, the claims of rank, and all the demands made by everybody. The Emperor directed that the Princesses should carry the Empress's mantle; there was the greatest difficulty in inducing them to consent to do this; and I remember well that when at last they did consent, they performed their office with so ill a grace that the Empress, overpowered by the weight of her magnificent robe, could hardly walk, for they would scarcely lift the folds off the ground. They obtained permission to have their own trains borne by their respective chamberlains, and this distinction somewhat consoled them for the obligation that was imposed upon them.*

In the mean time we learned that the Pope had

* The Memoirs of Count Miot de Melito contain some curious particulars of Court life, during the Consulate and the Empire; the quarrels of Bonaparte with his brothers on account of the succession to the throne, and the adoption of the son of Louis Bonaparte. He also narrates in detail the disputes about precedence, and the vexed question of the Empress's mantle. It was after a long discussion between the Arch-Chancellor, the Arch-Treasurer, the Minister of the Interior, the Grand Equerry, and the Grand Marshal of the Court, the Princes Louis and Joseph, and the Emperor himself, that a decision was arrived at which denied to those princes the large mantle of ermine—"an attribute," as it was called, "of sovereignty;" and that it was resolved the words "to hold up the mantle" should be used in the *procès-verbal* instead of "to carry the train" ("Mémoires du Comte Miot de Melito," vol. ii. p. 323, *et seq.*).—P. R.

left Rome on the 2nd of November. The slowness of his journey and the vast scale of the preparations rendered it necessary to put off the coronation until the 2nd of December; and on the 24th of November the Court went to Fontainebleau to receive his Holiness, who arrived there on the following day.

Before I close this Chapter, I wish to mention a circumstance which ought, it seems to me, to be recorded. The Emperor had, for the moment, relinquished the idea of a divorce, but, being still extremely anxious to have an heir, he asked his wife whether she would consent to acknowledge a child of his as her own, and to feign pregnancy, so that every one should be deceived. She consented to accede to any wish of his on this point. Then Bonaparte sent for Corvisart, his chief physician, in whom he had well-merited confidence, and confided his plan to him. "If I succeed," said he, "in making sure of the birth of a boy who shall be my own son, I want you, as a witness of the pretended confinement of the Empress, to do all that would be necessary to give the device every appearance of reality." Corvisart, who felt that his honour and probity were injured by the mere proposition, refused to do what the Emperor required of him, but promised inviolable secrecy. It was not until long afterwards, and since Bonaparte's second marriage,

that he confided this fact to me, while at the same time he affirmed in the strongest terms the legitimate birth of the King of Rome, concerning which some entirely unfounded doubts had been raised.

CHAPTER X.

The Pope's arrival in Paris—The Plebiscitum—The marriage of the Empress Josephine—The coronation fêtes in the Champ de Mars, at the Opera, etc.—The Court of the Empress.

THE Pope was probably induced to come to France solely by the representations which were made to him of advantages and concessions to be gained by such a gracious act. He arrived at Fontainebleau with the intention of lending himself to all that might be required of him, within legitimate bounds; and, notwithstanding the superiority on which the conqueror who had forced him to take this unheard-of step plumed himself, and the small respect in which the Court held a sovereign who did not reckon the sword among the insignia of his royalty, he impressed everybody by his dignity, and the gravity of his bearing.

The Emperor went to meet him at a few leagues' distance from the château, and when the carriages met, he alighted, as did his Holiness also. The Pope and the Emperor embraced, and then got into the same carriage, the Emperor entering first, in

order, as the *Moniteur* of the day explained, to give the Pope the right-hand seat, and so they came to the palace.

The Pope arrived on Sunday,* at noon; and having rested for a while in his own apartment, to which he was conducted by the Grand Chamberlain (*i.e.* M. de Talleyrand), the Grand Marshal, and the Grand Master of Ceremonies, he visited the Emperor, who met him outside the door of his cabinet, and after an interview of half an hour's duration, reconducted him to the great hall, which was then called "The Hall of the Great Officers." The Empress had received instructions to place the Pope at her right hand.

After these visits, Prince Louis, the Ministers, the Arch-Chancellor, the Arch-Treasurer, Cardinal Fesch, and the great officers then at Fontainebleau, were presented to the Pope, who received them all most graciously. He afterwards dined with the Emperor and retired early.

The Pope was at this time sixty-two years of age; tall, and upright of figure, and with a handsome, grave, benevolent face. He was attended by a numerous suite of Italian priests; anything but impressive personages, whose rough, noisy, and vulgar manners contrasted strangely with the grave good-breeding of the French clergy. The

* 25th November, 1804, or 4th Frimaire, year 13.—P. R.

Palace of Fontainebleau presented a strange spectacle just then, inhabited as it was by so extraordinary a medley of persons: sovereigns, princes, military officers, priests, women, all gathered together in the different salons at the prescribed hours. On the day after his arrival, his Holiness received in his own apartment all those persons belonging to the Court who desired that honour. We had the privilege of kissing his hand and receiving his blessing. His presence in such a place, and on so great an occasion, affected me very deeply.

After these receptions, visits were again interchanged between the sovereigns. On the occasion of her second interview with the Pope, the Empress carried out the intention she had secretly formed, and confided to him that her marriage had been a civil ceremony only. His Holiness, after having commended her for the good use she made of her power, and addressing her as "My daughter," promised her that he would require of the Emperor that his coronation should be preceded by the ceremony necessary to legitimize his marriage with her; and, in fact, the Emperor was obliged to consent to this. On their return to Paris, Cardinal Fesch married Bonaparte to Josephine, as I shall presently relate.

On the Monday evening a concert was to take place in the apartment of the Empress. The Pope,

however, declined to be present, and retired just as the entertainment was about to begin.

At this time the Emperor took a fancy to Madame de X——, and, whether it was that his budding passion had inspired him with a wish to please, or that his satisfaction at the success of his plans kept him in good humour, I cannot say; certain it is, however, that while we were at Fontainebleau he was more affable and approachable than usual. After the Pope had retired, the Emperor remained in the Empress's drawing-room, and talked, not with the men, but, by preference, with the women who were there. His wife, keen of perception where anything which aroused her jealousy was in question, was struck by this departure from his ordinary habits, and suspected that some new fancy was the cause of it. She could not, however, discover the real object of his thoughts, because he very adroitly paid marked attention to each of us in succession; and Madame de X——, who as yet conducted herself with great reserve, did not seem to perceive that she was the particular object of the general gallantries that the Emperor affected to distribute among us. Some of those present believed that the Maréchale Ney was about to receive his homage. The Maréchale is the daughter of M. Augué, formerly Receiver-General of Finance, and her mother was one of the Bedchamber Women to Queen Marie

Antoinette. She was educated by her aunt, Madame Campan, and when in her establishment became the friend and companion of Hortense de Beauharnais, now the Princess Louis. She was at this time about twenty-two or twenty-three years old, and rather pretty, but too thin. She knew very little of the world, was excessively shy, and had not the slightest desire to attract the Emperor, whom she regarded with extreme dread.

During our sojourn at Fontainebleau, a decree of the Senate was published in the *Moniteur*. It was to the effect that, according to the verification of the registers of the votes given upon the question of the Empire, made by a commission of the Senate, Bonaparte and his family were declared to be called to the throne of France. The general total of voters amounted to 3,574,898. Of these, 3,572,329 were Ayes, 2569 Noes.

The Court returned to Paris on Thursday, the 29th of November. The Emperor and the Pope travelled in the same carriage, and his Holiness was lodged in the Pavilion of Flora. Certain members of the Household were appointed to attend on him.

During the first few days of his residence in Paris, the Pope was not treated by the inhabitants with all the respect which might have been anticipated. A crowd, attracted by curiosity, thronged his path when he visited the churches, and assembled under

his balcony when he appeared there to give his blessing. By degrees, however, the description of the dignity of his manners, given by those who had access to him, several noble and affecting sayings of his on different occasions, and the self-possession which he maintained in a position so new and strange to the Chief of Christendom, produced a marked change even among the lower classes of the people.

Every morning the terrace of the Tuileries was covered with a great multitude, calling loudly for him, and kneeling to receive his blessing. The people were admitted to the gallery of the Louvre at certain specified times during the day, and then the Pope would walk from end to end of it and bless the multitude. Mothers flocked thither with their children, and were received with special kindness. One day, an individual who was a well-known enemy of religion was in the gallery when the Pope arrived, and as his curiosity urged him to stay, he held himself aloof, as though to avoid the benediction. The Pope drew near him, divined his secret hostility, and said to him, in the gentlest tone, "Why do you avoid me, sir? Is there any danger in an old man's blessing?"

Very soon all Paris resounded with praise of the Pope, and the Emperor's jealousy was excited. He made certain arrangements which obliged his Holi-

ness to deny himself to the too eager entreaties of the faithful; and the Pope, who detected the Emperor's uneasiness, adopted extreme reserve, but without allowing the slightest sign of human pride to appear in his manner or conduct.

Two days before the coronation, M. de Rémusat, who, in addition to being Grand Chamberlain, was also Keeper of the Wardrobe, and therefore charged with all the details of the Imperial costumes, submitted to the Empress the superb diadem which had just been made for her. He found her in a state of delight and satisfaction, which she could hardly conceal from general notice. Presently she took my husband apart, and confided to him that, on the morning of that same day, an altar had been erected in the Emperor's cabinet, and that Cardinal Fesch had performed the marriage ceremony between herself and Bonaparte, in the presence of two aides-de-camp. After the ceremony she had procured a written certificate of the marriage from the Cardinal. She carefully preserved this document, and, notwithstanding all the Emperor's efforts to obtain it from her, she never could be induced to part with it.

It has since been said that any religious marriage not witnessed by the *curé* of the parish in which it is celebrated is *de facto* null and void, and that a means of breaking the marriage was purposely reserved by this expedient. In that case, Car-

dinal Fesch must have been a consenting party to the fraud; and yet his subsequent conduct forbids any such supposition. When violent quarrels arose on the subject of the divorce, and the Empress went so far as to threaten her husband with the publication of the certificate in her possession, Cardinal Fesch was consulted upon the point. He repeatedly affirmed that the document was in good form, and that his conscience obliged him to declare the marriage so validly solemnized that it could not be broken otherwise than by an act of arbitrary authority.

After the divorce the Emperor wanted to get possession of the document in question; but the Cardinal advised the Empress not to part with it. It is a remarkable proof of the extent to which suspicion and distrust prevailed among all the members of the Bonaparte family, that the Empress, while availing herself of advice that coincided with her own feelings, told me she sometimes thought the Cardinal gave her that advice in connivance with the Emperor, who wanted to drive her to some outbreak which would give him an excuse for banishing her from France. And yet, the uncle and nephew had quarrelled, at that very time, about the Pope's affairs.

On the 2nd of December, the coronation took place. It would be difficult to describe its splendour

or to enter into the details of that day. The weather was cold, but dry and bright; the streets of Paris were crowded with people more curious than enthusiastic; the Guard under arms presented a fine spectacle.

The Pope preceded the Emperor by several hours, and waited with admirable patience for the long-delayed arrival of the procession. He sat upon the throne erected for him in the church, and made no complaint either of cold or weariness. The Cathedral of Notre Dame was decorated with taste and magnificence. At the far end was a splendid throne for the Emperor, on which he was to appear surrounded by his entire Court. Before setting out for Notre Dame, we were admitted to the apartment of the Empress. Our attire was very brilliant, but it paled before the magnificence of the costumes of the Imperial family. The Empress especially, sparkling with diamonds, and wearing her hair in countless curls, a style of the time of Louis XVI., did not look more than twenty-five.* She wore a white satin gown, and a Court mantle of the same material, both profusely embroidered in mingled gold and silver. Her ornaments consisted of a diadem, a necklace, earrings, and a girdle of diamonds of immense value, and all this gorgeous attire was worn

* She was forty-one, having been born at Martinique on the 23rd of June, 1763.

with her customary easy grace. Her sisters-in-law were also adorned with a vast quantity of jewels. The Emperor inspected each of us in her turn, smiling at this luxury, which was, like all the rest, a sudden creation of his sovereign will.

His own costume was brilliant. He was to assume the Imperial robes at Notre Dame, but for the present he wore a French coat of red velvet, embroidered in gold, a white sash, a short cloak sewn with bees, a plumed hat turned up in front with a diamond buckle, and the collar of the Legion of Honour in diamonds. This superb dress became him well. The whole Court wore velvet cloaks embroidered in gold. It must be acknowledged that we paraded ourselves a little for our common amusement; but the spectacle was really beautiful.

The Emperor got into his carriage—it had seven glasses, and was gorgeously gilded—with his wife and his two brothers, Joseph and Louis. Then we all took our appointed places in the carriages which were to follow, and the splendid cortége proceeded at a foot pace to Notre Dame. There was no lack of shouting on our way; and although the acclamations of the people had not that ring of enthusiasm which a sovereign jealous of his people's love longs to recognize, they sufficed to gratify the vanity of a haughty master, but one who was not sensitive.

On his arrival at Notre Dame, the Emperor

entered the archiepiscopal palace, and there assumed his robes of State. They seemed almost to crush him; his slight frame collapsed under the enormous mantle of ermine. A simple laurel wreath encircled his head; he looked like an antique medallion, but he was extremely pale, and genuinely affected. The expression of his countenance was stern, and somewhat distressed.

The ceremony was grand and impressive. A general movement of admiration was noticeable at the moment when the Empress was crowned. She was so unaffected, so graceful, as she advanced towards the altar; she knelt down with such simple elegance, that all eyes were delighted with the picture she presented. When she had to walk from the altar to the throne, there was a slight altercation with her sisters-in-law, who carried her mantle with such an ill grace, that I observed at one moment the new-made Empress could not advance a step. The Emperor perceived this, and spoke a few sharp short words to his sisters, which speedily brought them to reason.

During the ceremony, the Pope wore an air of resignation of a noble sort, the result of his own will, and for a purpose of great utility. It was between two and three o'clock when the cortége left Notre Dame, and we did not reach the Tuileries until the short December day had closed in. We were lighted

by the general illuminations, and a number of torches were carried along the line of vehicles. We dined at the château, with the Grand Marshal, and after dinner the Emperor received all the members of the Court who had not yet retired. He was in high spirits, and delighted with the ceremony; he admired us all, jested about the effect of finery on women, and said to us, laughingly, "You owe it to me, mesdames, that you are so charming!" He had not allowed the Empress to take off her crown, although she had dined *tête-à-tête* with him, and he complimented her on the grace with which she wore it. At length he dismissed us.

Innumerable fêtes and rejoicings took place during the ensuing month. On the 5th of December, the Emperor went to the Champ de Mars with the same state as on the coronation day, and distributed Eagles to a number of regiments. The enthusiasm of the soldiers far surpassed that of the people; but the bad weather spoiled the effect of this second great day. It rained in torrents, but nevertheless an immense multitude thronged the Champ de Mars. M. Maret devoted the following flowery passage in the *Moniteur* to the rain of the 5th of December:—"Although the situation of the spectators was distressing, there was not one among them who did not find ample compensation in the sentiment which induced him to remain in his place, and in the utterance of

aspirations (*vœux*), to which his acclamations bore testimony."

A common and absurd form of flattery, and one which has been resorted to in every age, is the making believe that because a king has need of sunshine, he can secure its presence. I remember when it was a current saying at the Tuileries that the Emperor had only to fix a certain day for a review or a hunting-party, and the sky could not fail to be cloudless. Whenever it was so, the fact was eagerly remarked, but nothing was said about the days that were dull or rainy. A similar device was adopted in the time of Louis XIV. It was not, indeed, possible to say that it did not rain during the distribution of the Eagles at the Champ de Mars, but I met many people who gravely assured me that the rain did not wet them.

A spacious platform had been constructed for the accommodation of the Imperial family and the Court; on this the throne, protected as much as possible from the rain, was placed. The canvas and hangings were speedily wet through; the Empress was obliged to withdraw, with her daughter—who was out for the first time after the birth of her second child—and her sisters-in-law, excepting Madame Murat, who continued to brave the weather although she was lightly dressed. She was training herself as she said, laughingly, "to endure the inevitable constraints of royalty."

On that day a sumptuous banquet was given at the Tuileries. A table was laid in the Gallery of Diana, beneath a magnificent canopy, for the Pope, the Emperor, the Empress, and the first Arch-Chancellor of the Germanic Empire. The Pope sat on the left of the Empress, and the Emperor on her right. They were waited on by the great officers of the Household. Lower down, there was a table for the Princes, among whom was the Hereditary Prince of Baden; a table for the Ministers; one for the ladies and gentlemen of the Imperial Household—all served with the utmost luxury. Some fine music was performed during the repast. Then came a largely-attended reception, at which the Pope was present; and a ballet, performed by dancers from the Opera, in the great drawing-room. The Pope withdrew before the ballet. The evening concluded with cards, and the Emperor gave the signal for departure by retiring.

At the Emperor's Court, cards formed merely a portion of the ceremonial. He never allowed money to be staked, and the games were whist and loto. We used to make up the tables just for something to do, and generally talked, while we held our cards without looking at them. The Empress was fond of playing cards, even without money, and played whist in real earnest. Her card-table, and that of the Princesses, were placed in the room

called the Emperor's cabinet, at the entrance of the Gallery of Diana. She played with the greatest personages present, foreigners, ambassadors, or Frenchmen. The two Ladies-in-Waiting for the week occupied seats behind her; a Chamberlain stood near her chair. While she was playing, all who were in the rooms came, one after the other, to make their bows and curtsies to her. Bonaparte's brothers and sisters also played, and sent invitations by their respective Chamberlains to various persons to join their tables. His mother, who had been given a house and the title of Princess, but who was always called Madame Mère, did the same. The Emperor walked about everywhere, preceded by Chamberlains who announced his presence. On his approach every voice was hushed; no one moved from his place; the ladies stood up, waiting for the insignificant, and frequently ungracious, remarks which he would address to them. He never remembered a name, and his first question almost invariably was, "And what do *you* call yourself?" There was not a woman present on those occasions who did not rejoice when he moved away from her vicinity.

This reminds me of an anecdote about Grétry. As a member of the Institute he frequently attended the Sunday receptions, and it happened several times that the Emperor, who had come to recognize

his face, approached him almost mechanically, and asked him his name. One day, Grétry, who was tired of this perpetual question, and perhaps a little annoyed at not having produced a more lasting impression, answered to the Emperor's rudely uttered "And you! who are you?" in a sharp, impatient tone, "Sire, I am still Grétry." Ever afterwards the Emperor recognized him perfectly.

The Empress, on the contrary, had an accurate memory for names, and also for the smallest particulars concerning each individual. For a long time the routine of the Court receptions continued to be what I have described. Afterwards, concerts, ballets, and even plays, were added to the list of amusements; but I shall refer to this subject in due order of time. The Emperor desired that special places should be assigned to the Ladies-in-Waiting, and these small privileges excited small jealousies which engendered great animosities, after the invariable law of Courts. At this period the Emperor indulged in ceremonies of every kind; he liked them, especially because they were of his own creation. He always spoiled their effect to some extent by the habitual precipitation from which he could rarely refrain, and by the apprehension lest all should not be exactly as he wished, with which he inspired everybody. On one occasion, he gave audience, seated on his throne and surrounded by the great officers of the Household, the

Marshals, and the Senate, to all the Prefects, and to the Presidents of the electoral colleges. He then granted a second audience to the former, and strongly urged them to carry out the conscription. "Without that," said the Emperor (and these words were inserted in the *Moniteur*), "there can be neither national power nor national independence." No doubt, he was then cherishing a project for placing the crown of Italy upon his head, and felt that his designs must lead to war; and, besides, as the impossibility of an invasion of England had been made clear to him, although the preparations were still carried on, the necessity for employing an army which was becoming a burthen to France was pressed upon his attention. In the midst of these graver subjects of anxiety, he had reason to be provoked with the Parisians. He had bespoken from Chénier a tragedy to be acted on the occasion of the coronation. The poet had selected Cyrus for his theme, and the fifth act of the tragedy (the coronation of the hero of ancient story) represented the ceremony of Notre Dame accurately enough. The piece was a poor production, and the allusions in it were too palpable, too evidently written to order. The Parisian audience hissed the tragedy from first to last, and laughed aloud at the scene of the enthronement. The Emperor was much displeased; he was as angry with my husband as if

M. de Rémusat had been responsible to him for the approbation of the public, and by the revelation of this weak point the public learned to avenge themselves at the theatre for the silence so rigorously imposed upon them elsewhere.

The Senate gave a magnificent fête, and the Corps Législatif followed their example. On the 16th of December an entertainment took place, by which the city of Paris incurred a debt, unpaid for many years, for a grand public banquet, fireworks, a ball, and the silver-gilt toilet-services presented to the Emperor and Empress. Addresses and laudatory inscriptions abounded in all directions. The flatteries lavished upon Louis XIV. during his reign have been much commented upon; I am sure, if they were all put together, they would not amount to one-tenth of those which were bestowed upon Bonaparte. Some years later, at another fête given by the city of Paris to the Emperor, the repertory of inscriptions being exhausted, a brilliant device was resorted to: over the throne which he was to occupy were placed in letters of gold the following words from the Holy Scriptures: "I am that I am." And no one seemed to be scandalized!

France was given up at this time to fêtes and merry-making. Medals were struck and distributed profusely. The Marshals gave a great ball in the Opera House, at a cost of ten thousand francs to

each. The pit was boarded over, on a level with the stage; the boxes were festooned with silver gauze, brilliantly lighted, and filled with ladies in full dress. The Imperial family were seated apart on an estrade, and the company danced in the vast enclosure. Flowers and diamonds in profusion, splendid dresses, and the magnificence of the Court made this a most brilliant entertainment. We were all put to great expense on these occasions. A sum of ten thousand francs was allowed to the Ladies-in-Waiting as compensation for their expenditure, but it was not nearly sufficient. The cost of the coronation amounted to four millions of francs (£160,000).

The Princes and distinguished foreigners staying in Paris paid an assiduous court to our sovereign, and the Emperor did the honours of Paris with a good grace. Prince Louis of Baden was then very young, and rather shy; he kept himself in the background. The Prince Primate, who was over sixty, was amiable, lively, and garrulous. He was well acquainted with France, and with Paris, where he had lived in his youth; he was fond of literature, and friendly with the former Academicians, who were admitted, with a few other persons, to the smaller receptions held by the Empress. During this winter, about fifty ladies and a number of gentleman used to be invited,

once or twice a week, to sup at the Tuileries. Eight o'clock was the hour named, and full dress, but not Court dress, was worn. We played at cards in the drawing-room on the ground-floor, which is now Madame's drawing-room. On Bonaparte's appearance we used to pass into a music-room, where a musical performance by Italian singers occupied half an hour; then we returned to the drawing-room, and resumed our cards. The Emperor would move about, either playing or talking. A sumptuous and elegant supper was served at eleven o'clock, the ladies only being seated. Bonaparte's armchair would remain unoccupied; he would saunter round the table, but he ate nothing. When supper was over, he would take his departure. The Princes and Princesses, the great officers of the Empire, two or three Ministers, a few Marshals, some Generals, Senators, State Councillors, and their wives were always invited to these small parties. There was great rivalry in dress. The Empress, as well as her sisters-in-law, always appeared in something new, with quantities of pearls and precious stones. She was the possessor of pearls worth a million of francs. At that time stuffs shot with gold or silver began to be worn. During the winter, turbans became the fashion at Court; they were made either of white or coloured muslin, spotted with gold, or of a brilliant Turkish material. By

degrees our garments assumed an Eastern shape: over our richly embroidered muslin gowns we used to wear short dresses of some coloured fabric, open in front: our arms, shoulders, and bosoms were uncovered.

The Emperor, who, as I shall presently relate, was becoming more and more deeply in love, sought to disguise the fact by paying attentions to all the ladies, and seemed at his ease only when surrounded by them. The gentlemen would then become aware that their presence embarrassed him, and they would retire to an adjoining room. The scene was then not unlike a harem, as I remarked one evening to Bonaparte. He was in a good humour, and laughed; but my jest was far from pleasing to the Empress.

The Pope, who passed his evenings in retirement, visited the churches, hospitals, and public institutions in the morning. He officiated on one occasion at Notre Dame, and a great crowd was admitted to kiss his feet. He visited Versailles, and the suburbs of Paris, and was received with such profound respect at the Invalides, that the Emperor grew uneasy. And yet I heard that while his Holiness was most anxious to return to Rome, the Emperor still detained him. I have never been able to discover his motive.

The Pope was always dressed in white: having

been a monk, he wore a woollen habit and over it a sort of surplice of cambric trimmed with lace, which had a curious effect. His "calotte," or skull-cap, was of white woollen stuff.

At the end of December, the Corps Législatif was opened in state; laboured speeches upon the importance and the happiness of the great event which had just taken place were delivered, and a report, not only flourishing but also true, on the prosperous condition of France was presented.

Meanwhile, applications for places at the new Court were numerous, and the Emperor acceded to some of them. He also named senators from among the presidents of the electoral colleges. Marmont was made colonel-general of the Mounted Chasseurs; and the Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour was bestowed on Cambacérès, Lebrun, the Marshals, Cardinal Fesch, MM. Duroc, De Caulaincourt, De Talleyrand, De Ségur, and also on several Ministers, the Chief Judge, and on MM. Gaudin and Portalis, Ministers of Public Worship. These appointments and favours kept every one in a state of expectation.

Thenceforth the impulse was given; people became accustomed to wishing, to waiting, to seeing daily some new thing. Each day would bring forth some little circumstance, unexpected in itself, but anticipated—for we had acquired a habit of always

being on the look-out for something. Since then the Emperor extended the system of continually exciting ambition, curiosity, and hope to the entire nation, to the whole of Europe: this was not the least ingenious secret of his government.

CHAPTER XI.

1807.

The Emperor in love—Madame de X——. Madame de Damas —The Empress confides in me—Palace intrigues—Murat is raised to the rank of Prince.

THE Empress could not forbear from occasionally complaining, in private, that her son had no share in the promotions which were made daily; but she had the good sense to conceal her dissatisfaction, and Eugène himself maintained an attitude which was highly honourable to him, and in marked contrast with the jealous impatience of Murat. Madame Murat was continually importuning the Emperor to raise her husband to a rank which would place him above the Marshals, among whom it annoyed him to be included. During the winter, both the husband and wife contrived to profit by the weakness of the Emperor, and earned a claim to his favour by making themselves useful in his new love affair, as we shall presently see.

I have already said that Eugène was captivated by Madame de X——. This lady, who was then

twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, was of fair hair and complexion; her blue eyes could wear any expression she chose, except indeed that of frankness; her disposition was habitually deceitful. Her nose was aquiline and rather long, her mouth was lovely, and her teeth, which she frequently displayed, were beautiful. She was of middle height, with an elegant but too slender figure; she had small feet, and danced to perfection. She had no remarkable ability, but was not wanting in quickness; her manners were quiet and cold. It was difficult to excite her feelings, still more difficult to hurt them.

The Empress had at first treated her with marked distinction. She praised her beauty, approved of her style of dress, and made more of her than of others, for the sake of her son, Prince Eugène. This, perhaps, led, in the first instance, to the Emperor's taking notice of her. He began to pay her attention during the sojourn of the Court at Fontainebleau.

Madame Murat, who was the first to discern her brother's admiration, tried to insinuate herself into the confidence of the lady, and succeeded so far as to set her on her guard against the keen eyes of the Empress. Murat, in accordance, I believe, with some private arrangement, pretended to be an admirer of Madame de X——, and thus for a time threw the Court off the scent.

The Empress, who was well aware of the new fancy of the Emperor, but could not discover its object, at first suspected the Maréchale Ney, to whom he was in the habit of talking a good deal; and for a few days that poor lady was closely watched. As usual, the Empress confided her jealous suspicions to me, but I saw nothing as yet to justify them.

The Empress complained to Madame Louis of what she called the perfidy of Madame Ney. The latter was questioned, and after having declared that her own feeling towards the Emperor was simply fear, she admitted that he had sometimes appeared to pay her attention, and that Madame de X—— had congratulated her on the grand conquest she was about to make. This was a flash of light to the Empress. She at once discovered the truth, and saw that Murat was feigning love for the lady only that he might be the bearer of declarations from the Emperor.

In Duroc's deference towards Madame de X——, she also discerned a proof of his master's sentiments, and in the conduct of Madame Murat a deeply-laid scheme against her own peace of mind. The Emperor began to pass more time in his wife's apartments. Nearly every evening he would come down, and his looks and words betrayed the object of his preference. If Josephine went privately to the

theatre—for the Emperor did not like her to appear in public without him—he would join her party unexpectedly; and day by day he became more engrossed and less capable of self-control. Madame de X—— maintained an appearance of indifference, but she made use of every art of feminine coquetry. Her dress became more and more elegant, her smile more subtle, her looks more full of meaning, and it was soon easy enough to guess what was going on. The Empress suspected that Madame Murat connived at secret interviews in her own house, and she afterwards became certain of the fact. Then, according to her custom, she burst into tears and reproaches, and once more I found myself obliged to listen to confidences which were dangerous to receive, and to give advice which was never heeded.

The Empress attempted expostulations, but they were very badly taken. Her husband lost his temper, and having reproached her with opposing him, he ordered her to be silent; and while she, abandoned to her grief, was sad and downcast in public, he, more gay, free, and animated than we had yet seen him, paid attention to us all, and lavished rough compliments on us. On the occasions of the Empress's receptions, of which I have already spoken, he looked really like a Sultan. He would sit down to a card-table, often selecting his sister Caroline, Madame de X——, and myself to make up his game;

and, scarcely noticing his cards, he would start some sentimental discussion in his own style, with more wit than sentiment, occasionally with doubtful taste, but with a great deal of animation. On these occasions Madame de X—— was very reserved, and, being probably afraid lest I might make some discoveries, would answer in monosyllables only.

Madame Murat took but slight interest in these conversations; she always went straight to her point, and cared little for detail. As for me, I was amused, and I could take my part in them with a liberty of spirit not possessed by the other three, who were all more or less preoccupied. Sometimes, without naming any one, Bonaparte would commence a dissertation on jealousy, and then it was easy to see that he applied it to his wife. I understood him, and defended her gaily, as well as I could, without plainly indicating her; and I could see that Madame de X—— and Madame Murat gave me no thanks for that.

During these conversations, which always made her uneasy, Madame Bonaparte would keep a watch on us from the other end of the room, where she was playing at cards. Although she had reason to know she might depend on me, yet, as she was naturally suspicious, she sometimes feared that I would sacrifice her to the desire of pleasing the Emperor, and she was also vexed with me because *I* would not tax him with his conduct.

She would sometimes ask me to go to him and tell him of the harm which, as she said, this new entanglement was doing him in the eyes of the world; again, she wanted me to contrive that Madame de X—— should be watched in her own house, whither she knew Bonaparte sometimes went of an evening; or else she would make me write, in her presence, anonymous letters full of reproaches. These I wrote in order to satisfy her, and to prevent her from getting other persons to write them; but I carefully burned them afterwards, although I assured her that I had sent them.

Servants whom she could trust were employed to discover the proofs she sought for. The employés of her favourite tradespeople were taken into her confidence, and I suffered the more from her imprudent conduct, when I learned, shortly afterwards, that Madame Murat put down all the discoveries made by the Empress to my account, and accused me of mean spying, of which I was incapable.

The Empress was the more distressed because her son was profoundly grieved by this affair. Madame de X——, who, either from coquetry, inclination, or vanity, had at first listened favourably to him, avoided even the slightest appearance of friendship with him since her new and more brilliant conquest. She probably boasted to the Emperor of the passion with which she had inspired Eugène; certain it is

that the latter was treated with coldness by his stepfather. The Empress showed her anger at this; the Princess Louis was also distressed, but she concealed her feelings; Eugène was sore at heart, but his outward composure laid him little open to attack.

In all this, the undying hatred between the Bonapartes and the Beauharnais was displayed, and it was my fate to find myself entangled in it, notwithstanding all my moderation. I have discovered by experience that at Court everything, or nearly everything, depends on chance. Human prudence is not a sufficient safeguard, and I know no means of escaping from misconstruction, unless the sovereign himself be incapable of suspicion. Far from this, however, the Emperor welcomed all gossip, and believed everything that was ill-natured, on any subject. The surest way to please him was to carry every rumour to him, and to denounce everybody's conduct; and, therefore, M. de Rémusat who was placed so near him, never obtained his favour. He declined to tread such a path to success, although it was frequently pointed out to him by Duroc.

One evening the Emperor, who was quite out of patience, owing to a scene with his wife, in which, driven to desperation, she had declared she would forbid the entry of her apartments to Madame de X——, addressed himself to M. de Rémusat, and

complained that I did not use my influence over her, to dissuade her from acts of imprudence. He concluded by telling him that he wished to speak to me in private, and that I was to ask for an audience. M. de Rémusat conveyed this order to me, and accordingly on the following day I asked for an audience, which was fixed for the next morning.

A hunting-party had been arranged for that day. The Empress started first with the foreign Princes; she was to wait for the Emperor in the Bois de Boulogne. I arrived just as the Emperor was entering his carriage; his suite was assembled round him. He returned to his cabinet, in order to receive me, to the great astonishment of the Court, to whom the merest trifle was an event.

He began by complaining bitterly of the discussions in his household; and launched out into invectives against women in general, and his own wife in particular. He reproached me with assisting her spies, and accused me of many actions, of which I knew nothing whatever, but which had been reported to him. I recognized in all he said the ill offices of Madame Murat, and, which hurt me more, I perceived that in several instances the Empress had used my name, and attributed to me her own words or thoughts, in order to strengthen her case. This, together with the Emperor's angry words, distressed me, and tears rose to my eyes. The Emperor

noticed them, and rudely rebuked my emotion with a saying which he frequently used, and which I have already quoted: "Women have always two ways of producing an effect—paint and tears." Just then, these words, uttered in an ironical tone and with the intention of disconcerting me, had the opposite effect; they angered me, and gave me courage to answer, "No, Sire, but when I am unjustly accused, I cannot but weep tears of indignation."

I must render this testimony to the Emperor—he was seldom hard upon any one who displayed firmness; either because, meeting with it seldom, he was unprepared for it, or because his natural sense of justice responded to a feeling justly entertained.

He was not displeased with me. "Since you do not approve," he said, "of the watch set over me by the Empress, how is it your influence is not sufficient to deter her? She humiliates both herself and me by surrounding me with spies; she only furnishes weapons to her enemies. Since you are in her confidence, you must answer for her, and I shall hold you responsible for all her faults." He smiled slightly as he spoke these words. Then I represented to him that I was tenderly attached to the Empress; that I was incapable of advising her to an improper course of action; but that no one could gain much influence over a person of so passionate a nature.

I told him that he showed no tact in dealing with her, and that, whether he was rightly or wrongly suspected, he was harsh and treated her too roughly. I dared not blame the Empress for that which was really blameworthy in her conduct, for I knew he would not fail to repeat my words to his wife. I ended by telling him that I should keep away from the palace for some time, and that he would see whether things went on any better in consequence.

He then said that he was not, and could not be, in love; that he thought no more of Madame de X—— than of anybody else; that love was for men of a different disposition from his own; that he was altogether absorbed in politics; that he would have no women ruling in his Court; that they had injured Henry IV. and Louis XIV.; that his own business was a much more serious one than that of those kings, and that Frenchmen had become too grave to pardon their sovereign for recognized *liaisons* and official mistresses.

He spoke of his wife's past conduct, adding that she had not the right to be severe. I ventured to check him on this subject, and he was not angry with me. Finally, he questioned me as to the individuals who were employed as spies by the Empress. I could only answer that I knew none of them. Then he reproached me with want

of attachment to himself. I maintained that I was more sincerely devoted than those who carried worthless gossip to him. This conversation ended better than it had begun; I could perceive that I had made a favourable impression.

This interview lasted a long time; and the Empress, who had grown tired of waiting in the Bois de Boulogne, sent a mounted servant to discover what was detaining her husband. She was informed that he was alone with me. Her uneasiness became very great; she returned to the Tuileries, and finding I was no longer there, she sent Madame de Talhouet to my house to learn all that had taken place. In obedience to the Emperor's commands, I replied that the conversation had been restricted to certain matters relative to M. de Rémusat.

In the evening there was a dance at General Savary's, at which the Emperor had promised to be present. During the winter he took every opportunity of appearing in society; he was in good spirits, and would even dance, rather awkwardly. I arrived at Madame Savary's before the Court party. The Grand Marshal (Duroc) came forward to meet me, and offered his arm to conduct me to my place; and our host was full of attentions. My long audience of that morning had given rise to conjectures; I was treated with respect, as though I were in high favour, or had received confidential

communications. I could not help smiling at the simple cunning of these courtiers.

Presently the Emperor and Empress arrived. In making his progress round the room, Bonaparte stopped and spoke to me in a friendly manner. The Empress was watching us, full of anxiety. Madame Murat looked astonished and Madame de X—— nervous. All this amused me; I did not foresee the consequences. The next day the Empress pressed me with questions which I took care not to answer; she became offended, and declared that I was sacrificing her to the Emperor, that I chose the safe side, and that I no more than others cared for her. Her reproaches grieved me deeply.

I confided all my troubles to my dear mother. I was acquiring a bitter experience, and was still young enough to shed tears over it. My mother comforted me, and advised me to hold myself a little aloof, which I did; but this did not help me. The Emperor obliged me to speak to him, and, when he reproached his wife for her indiscreet behaviour, pretended he was repeating my opinions. The Empress treated me with coldness. I saw that she avoided speaking to me, and, for my part, I did not consider myself bound to seek her confidence.

The Emperor, who enjoyed sowing dissension between us, perceived this coolness, and paid me,

in consequence, all the more attention; but Madame de X——, who had been taught to dislike me, and was uneasy at the favour in which I was held, and who also perhaps did me the honour of feeling a little jealous, tried in every way to injure me. As everything works together for evil in this world only too readily, she found an occasion on which she was perfectly successful.

On the other hand, Eugène Beauharnais and the Princess Louis were convinced that I had betrayed their mother, in order to further the ambition of M. de Rémusat, who preferred the favour of the master to that of the mistress. M. de Rémusat held himself entirely aloof from all these matters, but where ambition is concerned, the probable is always the true in the belief of dwellers in a Court. Eugène, who had been friendly to my husband, now kept aloof from him. As courtiers, our position was not an unfavourable one; but as we were merely honourable people, and would not reap any disgraceful advantage from it, we were both greatly distressed.

I have still to relate how Madame de X—— contrived to strike the final blow. Among my mother's friends and mine, was Madame Charles de Damas, whose daughter, the wife of the Count de Vogué, was the intimate friend of my sister, and was also intimate, though in a less degree, with myself.

Madame de Damas was an ardent Royalist, and in the habit of expressing her opinions with some imprudence. She had even been accused, after the affair of the 3rd Nivôse (the infernal machine), of having concealed certain Chouans who were implicated. In the autumn of 1804, Madame de Damas was exiled to a distance of forty leagues from Paris, on account of some foolish speeches. This act of severity sorely distressed both the mother and the daughter; the latter was near her confinement, and I, having witnessed their tears and shared their grief, went for consolation to the Empress. She spoke to her husband, and he was good enough to listen to my petition, and to grant me the revocation of the sentence.

Madame de Damas, in her impulsive and affectionate way, published abroad the service I had rendered her, and, bound by feelings of gratitude to the Empress, as well as alarmed at the risk she had run, she became thenceforth more careful of her words. She never mentioned politics to me, but respected my position as I respected her feelings.

It happened, however, that in the Marquise de C——, a lady who had formerly been celebrated at Court and in society for her brilliancy of repartee, Madame de Damas had an enemy. Madame de C—— was on friendly terms with Madame de X——, and having discovered her *liaison* with the Emperor,

she extorted an avowal of the facts from Madame de X——. Then, being of an active and scheming disposition, she undertook to advise her friend in her capacity of mistress to the sovereign. They had some conversation about me, and Madame de C——, who always imagined the intrigues of Versailles in the incidents of the Emperor's Court, concluded, with some show of probability, that it was my intention to supplant the new favourite. As I was reputed to possess some talent — my reputation on this point owed a great deal to my mother's—it was supposed that I must be fond of intrigue. Madame de C——, intending to do a bad turn to Madame de Damas, and at the same time to injure me, mentioned her to Madame de X——, as a woman more devoted than ever to her Royalist opinions, ready to enter into any secret correspondence, and to abuse the indulgence with which she had been treated, by acting against the Emperor whenever she could. My friendship with her was described as more intimate than it really was; and this, being reported to the Emperor, served to prejudice him against me. He no longer summoned me to join him at the card-table, nor conversed with me; I was not invited to Malmaison, or to the hunting-parties; in short, I found myself in disgrace without being able to guess at the cause, for, on account of my failing health, I was living in comparative solitude and

retirement. My husband and I were too closely united for disgrace to fall on one without including the other, and neither of us could understand why we were thus treated.

As the Emperor's friendship for me cooled, I regained the confidence of his wife, who took me back into favour as lightly as she had given me up, and without a word of explanation. By this time I knew her sufficiently to understand that explanations would be useless. She enlightened me respecting the Emperor's displeasure. She had learned from him that Madame de C—— and Madame de X—— had informed against me. He had gone so far as to acknowledge to his wife that he was in love, and gave her to understand that he must not be thwarted; adding, in order to console her, that it was a passing fancy, which would only be increased by opposition, but would soon pass away, if it were not baulked.

The Empress made up her mind to endurance; but she never addressed Madame de X——. The latter cared little for that, however, and regarded the conjugal broils of which she was the cause with impudent indifference. Besides, under the direction of Madame Murat, she ministered to the Emperor's tastes, by retailing to him a great deal of evil of a great number of people. Many persons were ruined during her spell of favour, and she fostered the worst qualities of the Emperor's suspicious nature.

When I learnt this new accusation against me, I again requested an audience of him; but this time his manner was stern. He reproached me with being friendly only with his enemies, with having defended the Polignacs, with being an agent of the "aristocrats." "I intended to make a great lady of you," he said—"to raise your fortunes to a great height; but all that can only be the reward of entire devotion. You must break with your former friends, and the next time Madame de Damas comes to your house, you must refuse her admittance, and have her told that you cannot associate with my enemies. Then I shall believe in your attachment." I made no attempt to point out to him how contrary such a mode of action would be to all my habits; but I consented to refrain from seeing Madame de Damas, whose conduct, at least since the pardon had been granted her, I defended. He spoke to me very severely; he was deeply prejudiced, and I saw that I must only trust to time to open his eyes.

A few days later, Madame de Damas was again ordered into exile. She was ill in bed; and the Emperor sent Corvisart to her, to certify whether, in fact, she could not be removed. Corvisart was a friend of mine, and gave his opinion according to my wishes; but at length Madame de Damas recovered and left Paris. It was long before she returned. I no longer visited her, nor did she come

to me, but she retained her former affection for me, and perfectly understood the motives which constrained me to act as I did. Count Charles de Damas, who was straightforward, simple, and less indiscreet than his wife, was never annoyed by the police, while they kept constant watch on Madame de Damas. Some years later, the Emperor gave Madame de Vogué to understand that he wished her to be presented at Court: this was during the reign of the Archduchess.*

Meanwhile the Bonapartes triumphed. Eugène, the constant object of their jealousy, was positively badly treated, and was a source of secret trouble to the Emperor. Suddenly, towards the end of January, in very severe weather, Eugène received orders to proceed with his regiment to Italy within four and twenty hours. Eugène felt convinced that he was in complete disgrace. The Empress, believing this to be the doing of Madame de X——, wept bitterly, but her son strictly forbade her to make any appeal. He took leave of the Emperor, who received him with coldness, and we heard the following day that the Guards' Regiment of Guides had departed, its colonel marching at its head, notwithstanding the inclemency of the season.

* On the death of M. de Vogué, his widow married the Count de Chastellux, now a colonel, and brother-in-law to the imprudent La Bedoyère.

The Princess Louis, in speaking to me of this, expressed her pride in her brother's obedience. "If the Emperor," she said, "had exacted such a thing from a member of his own family, you would have seen what a noise would have been made; but not one word has been uttered in this case, and I think Bonaparte must be impressed by such an act of submission." And in fact he was, but still more by the ill-natured satisfaction of his brothers and sisters. He liked to disappoint them; and although, in a fit of jealousy, he had sent away his stepson, he immediately rewarded him for his good behaviour. On the 1st of February, 1805, the Senate received two letters * from the Emperor. In

* The following are the two messages addressed by the Emperor on the same day, 12th Plûviose, year 13 (1st February, 1805), to the Senate:—"Senators, we have appointed our brother-in-law, Marshal Murat, to be Grand Admiral of the Empire. We desire to recognize not only his services to the country, and the particular attachment he has shown to our person throughout his whole life, but also what is due to the lustre and dignity of the Crown, by raising to the rank of Prince an individual so closely allied to us by the ties of blood. Senators, we have appointed our stepson, Eugène Beauharnais, Vice-Arch-Chancellor of State to the Empire. Among all the acts of our sovereignty, there is not one more gratifying to our heart. Brought up by our care, and from his childhood, under our own people, he has proved himself worthy of imitating, and, with the help of God, of some day surpassing, the examples and the lessons we have given him. Although he is still young, we shall, from this day forward, consider him, on account of the experience we have had of his conduct in the most momentous circumstances, as

one he announced the elevation of Marshal Murat to the rank of Prince and Grand Admiral of the Empire. This was the reward of his recent acts of complaisance, and the result of Madame Murat's importunities. In the other letter, which was couched in flattering and affectionate terms towards Eugène, he was created Vice-Arch-Chancellor of State. This was one of the great posts of the Empire. Eugène heard of his promotion when he was a few miles from Lyons, where the courier found him on horseback at the head of his regiment, covered with thickly-falling snow.

Before I deal with the union of the crown of Italy with that of France, a great event which afforded us a new spectacle, and was the cause of the war that broke out in the autumn of this year, I will relate all that remains to be told concerning Madame de X——.

She seemed to engross the Emperor's thoughts more and more, and as she became assured of her

one of the pillars of our throne, and one of the most able defenders of his country. In the midst of the cares and trials of the high rank to which we have been called, our heart has sought for affection in the tenderness and consoling friendship of this child of our adoption; a consolation which is, no doubt, necessary to all men, but pre-eminently so to us, whose every moment is devoted to the affairs of nations. Our paternal blessing will follow this young Prince throughout his whole career, and, with the help of Providence, he will one day be worthy of the approbation of posterity."—P. R.

power, so she became less circumspect in her conduct towards the Empress, and seemed to delight in her misery. During a short stay which we made at Malmaison, appearances were more than ever outraged. To the surprise of every one, the Emperor would walk about the grounds with Madame de X—— and young Madame Savary—whose eyes and tongue were not at all formidable—and he devoted less time than usual to business. The Empress remained in her room, weeping, tortured with apprehension, brooding upon recognized *liaisons*, disgrace and oblivion for herself, and possibly divorce, the continually recurring object of her apprehensions.

She no longer had courage for useless altercations; but her sadness bore witness to her grief, and at last touched her husband's heart. Perhaps his love for her revived, or he became ashamed of the sway which her rival exercised over him; but, be that as it may, what he had predicted of himself came to pass. One day, when he was alone with his wife and saw her weeping at something he had said, he suddenly resumed the affectionate manner of former times, and, admitting her to the most intimate confidence, he owned to her once more that he had been infatuated, but added that it was all over. He told her he had detected an attempt to govern him—that Madame de

X—— had told him a number of very ill-natured stories; and he actually concluded by asking the Empress to assist him to put an end to an affair which he no longer cared about.

The Empress was not in the least vindictive; it is but just to say that for her. So soon as she found that she no longer had anything to fear, her anger vanished. Delighted to be rid of her trouble, she showed no severity towards the Emperor, but once more became the gentle and indulgent wife, always ready to forgive him. She objected to any publicity on this occasion, and even promised her husband that if he would alter his behaviour to Madame de X——, she, on her part, would alter hers also, and would shield the lady from any annoyance which might result from the change. She only claimed the right to an interview with Madame de X——. Accordingly, she sent for her, and spoke to her plainly and frankly, pointing out the risk she had run, excusing her apparent levity on the plea of her youth and imprudence, recommending greater discretion for the future, and promising that the past should be forgotten.

During this conversation, Madame de X—— remained perfectly self-possessed, calmly denying that she deserved any such admonitions, evincing no emotion, not a trace of gratitude. In sight of the whole Court, which for some time continued to observe her,

she maintained a cool and self-contained demeanour, which proved that her heart was not much concerned in the intimacy now broken off, and also that she could keep her private feelings well in check—for it is difficult to believe that her vanity, at any rate, was not deeply mortified. The Emperor, who, as I have already said, dreaded the least appearance of being ruled by anybody, ostentatiously exhibited his freedom. He was not even commonly civil to Madame de X——; he never looked at her; and he spoke slightingly of her, either to Madame Bonaparte, who could not deny herself the pleasure of repeating his words, or to men with whom he was on familiar terms. He was careful to explain that this had only been a passing fancy, and would tell how he had thrown it off, with candour most insulting towards her who had been its object. He was ashamed of his infatuation, for it was a proof that he had submitted to a power stronger than his own.

This behaviour confirmed me in a belief which I had often expounded to the Empress in order to console her. To be the wife of such a man might be a grand and enviable position, gratifying to one's pride at least; but to be his mistress could never be otherwise than unsatisfactory, for his was not a nature to compensate a weak and loving woman for the sacrifices she would have to make for

him, nor to afford an ambitious one the means of exercising power.

With the short reign of Madame de X—— the influence of Murat and the Bonapartes came, for the time being, to an end; for, on the reconciliation of the Emperor with his wife, his former confidence in her revived, and he heard from her lips of all the petty schemes of which she had been the victim, and himself the object. I profited in a measure by the change; yet the impression which had been made could not be altogether effaced, and the Emperor retained his conviction that M. de Rémusat and I were incapable of the sort of devotion that he required, a devotion claiming the sacrifice both of personal inclinations and of those "convenances" which he despised. He had a right, perhaps, to expect the former: one ought to renounce a Court life, unless one can make it the only sphere of one's thoughts and actions; and neither my husband nor I were capable of doing so. I have always longed to attach myself with all my heart to the duties of my state, and at this period I was too heart-sore not to feel some constraint in performing those which devolved on me. I began to see that the Emperor was not the man I had taken him for. Already he inspired me with fear rather than with affection; and in proportion as my assiduity in obeying him increased, I felt the sharp pain of vanishing illusions, and I suffered

beforehand from all that I foresaw. The quaking of the earth on which we stood, alarmed both M. de Rémusat and myself, and he especially resigned himself with difficulty to a life which was extremely unpleasing to him.

When I recall these troubles now, how happy I am to see him, quiet and contented, at the head of affairs in an important province, honourably fulfilling the duty of a good citizen, and serving his country usefully.* Can there be a worthier employment of the faculties of an enlightened and high-hearted man, or a greater contrast with the restless, troublesome, not to say ridiculous life which has to be led, without one moment's intermission, in the courts of Kings? I say courts, because they are all alike. No doubt the difference of character in sovereigns has some influence over the lives of those who surround them; there are shades of difference in the homage exacted by Louis XIV., our own King Louis XVIII., the Emperor Alexander, or Bonaparte. But though masters may differ, courtiers are everywhere the same; the same passions are in play, for vanity is invariably their secret spring. Jealousy, the longing to supplant others, the fear of being stopped on the road, or finding others preferred to one's self—these do, and always

* At the time I write, September, 1818, my husband is Prefect of the Département du Nord.

will, cause similar perturbations; and I am profoundly persuaded that any one who, dwelling in a palace, wishes to exercise his faculties of thinking and of feeling, must be unhappy.

Towards the end of this winter the Imperial Court was again augmented. A number of persons, among whom I could name some who are now inexorable to all who ever were in the Emperor's service, were eagerly bidding for place. The Empress, M. de Talleyrand, and M. de Rémusat received their requests, and handed long lists to Bonaparte, who would smile when he saw, in the same column, the names of *ci-devant* Liberals, of soldiers who had been jealous of his promotion, and of gentlemen who, after having jeered at what they called our farce of royalty, were now all begging to be allowed to play parts in it. Some of these petitions were granted. Mesdames de Turenne, De Montalivet, De Bouillé, Devaux, and Marescot were appointed Ladies-in-Waiting; MM. Hédouville, De Croÿ, De Mercy d'Argenteau, De Tournon, and De Bondy were made Chamberlains to the Emperor; MM. De Béarn, De Courtomer, and the Prince de Gavre, Chamberlains to the Empress; M. de Canisy, Equerry; and M. de Bausset, Prefect of the Palace, etc.

This numerous Court consisted of various elements foreign to each other, but all were brought to

one level by fear of the all-powerful master. There was little rivalry among the ladies; they were strangers to each other, and did not become intimate. The Empress treated them all alike. Madame de la Rochefoucauld, light-hearted and easy-tempered, showed no jealousy towards any one. The Mistress of the Robes was amiable, silent, and nothing more. Day by day I drew back from the somewhat dangerous friendship of the Empress, but I must own that such was her evenness of temper, so gracious was her bearing, that the Court circle by which she was surrounded was free from disturbance or jealousy.

It was not so in the case of the Emperor—but then he himself designedly kept up a state of disquiet. For instance, M. de Talleyrand, who had slightly diminished the importance of M. de Rémusat's position, not with the intention of injuring him, but in order to satisfy some new-comers who were jealous of my husband, was brought into closer contact with him afterwards, and began to appreciate his worth and to show some interest in him. Bonaparte perceived this. The slightest appearance of private friendship alarmed him, and he took the minutest precautions to prevent anything of the kind; so he spoke to my husband one day in a tone of unusual cordiality. "Take care," said he, "M. de Talleyrand seems to be making

advances to you; but I know to a certainty that he bears you no good will."

"And why should M. de Talleyrand bear me ill will?" said my husband to me, on repeating these words. We could not tell why, but this speech gave us a feeling of distrust, which was all that the Emperor wanted.

Such was the state of things at the Emperor's Court in the spring of 1805. I will now retrace my steps and give an account of the momentous resolution that was come to concerning the crown of Italy.

BOOK II.

1805–1808.

CHAPTER XII.

1805.

Opening of the Session of the Senate—M. de Talleyrand's Report—Letter from the Emperor to the King of England—Union of the Crown of Italy to the Empire—Madame Bacciochi becomes Princess of Piombino—Performance of "Athalie"—The Emperor goes to Italy—His dissatisfaction—M. de Talleyrand—Prospect of war with Austria.

On the 4th of February, 1805, we were informed by the *Moniteur* that the King of England had intimated, in his speech on the opening of parliament on the 16th of January, that the Emperor had made fresh propositions of reconciliation. The Government had replied that nothing could be agreed upon, without previously conferring with the Foreign Powers of the Continent, and especially with the Emperor Alexander.

According to custom, some sharp comments were made upon this speech, which, while they put forward the friendly relations that existed—at least, outwardly—between ourselves and the sovereigns of Europe, yet admitted a certain coolness between the Emperors of Russia and of France,

and attributed this coolness to the intrigues of MM. de Marcoff and De Woronzow, who were both partisans of the English policy. The King's speech also announced war between England and Spain.

On the same day, the 4th of February, the Senate having been assembled, M. de Talleyrand presented a report, very ably drawn up, in which he expounded the system of conduct adopted by Bonaparte towards the English. He described it as a constant effort for peace, while entertaining no fear of war. He drew attention to the state of our preparations which threatened the English coasts, many flotillas being equipped and ready in the harbours; and to the army, large in numbers and high in heart. He gave an account of the means of defence which the enemy had gathered together on the coasts, and which proved that the landing of the French was not looked upon as impossible; and after bestowing the highest praise on the conduct of the Emperor, he read to the assembled Senate the following letter, addressed to the King of England:—

"SIR AND BROTHER,

"Having been called by Providence, and by the voice of the Senate, the people, and the army, to the throne of France, my chief desire is for peace.

"France and England are wasting their pros-

perity. They may contend for centuries; but are their Governments rightly fulfilling their most sacred duty, and does not their conscience reproach them with so much blood shed in vain, for no definite end? I am not ashamed to take the initiative. I have, I think, sufficiently proved to the whole world that I do not fear the chances of war. Indeed, war can bring me nothing to fear. Peace is my heart-felt wish, but war has never been adverse to my renown. I implore your Majesty not to deprive yourself of the happiness of bestowing peace on the world. Do not delegate so consolatory an action to your children. Never was there a better occasion, nor a more favourable moment for imposing silence on passion, and for listening only to the voice of humanity and reason. If this opportunity be lost, what term can be assigned to a war which all my endeavours might fail to terminate? In the last ten years your Majesty's kingdom has increased in magnitude and wealth by more than the whole extent of Europe; your nation has reached the highest point of prosperity. What do you hope to gain by war? The coalition of some Continental Powers? The Continent will remain tranquil. A coalition would but increase the preponderance and the Continental greatness of France. To renew internal difficulties? The times are no longer the same. To destroy our revenues? Revenues founded

on good husbandry are not to be destroyed. To snatch her colonies from France? Colonies are objects of but secondary importance to France; and does not your Majesty already possess more than you can keep? If your Majesty will reflect on it, you will see that war will be without an object, without any probable result for yourself. Ah! how sad a prospect is it to engage nations in war, for war's sake!

"The world is large enough for our two nations to live in it, and the power of reason is sufficient to enable us to overcome all difficulties, if on both sides there is the will to do so. In any case, I have fulfilled a duty which I hold to be righteous, and which is dear to my heart. I trust your Majesty will believe in the sincerity of the sentiments I have just expressed, and in my earnest desire to give you a proof of them. On this, etc.

(Signed) "NAPOLEON.

"Paris { 12th Nivôse, year 13. / 2nd January, 1805."

After having eulogized this letter (surely a remarkable one!) as a striking proof of Bonaparte's love for the French, of his desire for peace, and of his generous moderation, M. de Talleyrand communicated the reply of Lord Mulgrave, the Foreign Secretary. It was as follows:—

"His Majesty has received the letter addressed to him by the Chief of the French Government, dated the 2nd inst.

"His Majesty has no dearer wish than to embrace the first opportunity of once more procuring for his subjects the advantages of a peace, which shall be founded on bases not incompatible with the permanent security and the essential interests of his States. His Majesty is convinced that this end can only be attained by an arrangement which will provide alike for the future security and tranquillity of Europe, and prevent a renewal of the dangers and misfortunes which have beset the Continent.

"His Majesty, therefore, feels it to be impossible to reply more decisively to the question which has been put to him, until he has had time to communi- with those Continental Powers with whom he is allied, and particularly with the Emperor of Russia, who has given the strongest proofs of his wisdom and good feeling, and of the deep interest which he takes in the security and independence of Europe.

"14th January, 1805."

The vague and indefinite character of this thoroughly diplomatic reply exhibited the Emperor's letter to great advantage. That letter was firm in tone, and bore every appearance of magnanimous sincerity. It had, therefore, a good effect, and the

various reports of those whose task it was to present it to the three great bodies of the State, put it in the most favourable light.

The report of Regnault de Saint Jean d'Angely, Counsellor of State, is remarkable and interesting even now. The praises accorded to the Emperor, though carried to excess, are finely phrased; the picture of Europe is ably drawn; that of the evil which war must entail on England is at least specious; and, finally, the description of our prosperity at that period is impressive, and very little, if at all, exaggerated.

"France," he said, "has nothing to ask from Heaven, but that the sun may continue to shine, the rain to fall on our fields, and the earth to render the seed fruitful."

All this was true then, and had a wise administration, a moderate government, and a liberal constitution been given to France, that prosperity would have been consolidated. But constitutional ideas formed no part of Bonaparte's plan. Perhaps he really believed, as he often said, that the French character and the geographical position of France were opposed to representative government. Perhaps, conscious of his own strength and ability, he could not make up his mind to sacrifice to the future well-being of France those advantages which he believed he could give us by the mere

strength of his will. Whatever was the case, he seldom lost an opportunity of disparaging our neighbour's form of government.

"The unfortunate position in which you have placed your nation," he wrote in the *Moniteur*, addressing himself to the English Cabinet, "can only be explained by the ill fortune of a State whose home policy is insecure, and whose Government is the wretched tool of Parliamentary factions and of a powerful oligarchy."

Although he felt at times that he was opposing the spirit of the age, he believed himself strong enough to resist it. At a later period he said, "During my lifetime I shall reign as I please; but my son must perforce be a Liberal." And meanwhile, he pictured to himself the creation of feudal states, believing that he could make them acceptable, and preserve them from the criticism which was beginning to assail ancient institutions, by establishing them on a scale so grand that as our pride would be enlisted, our reason might be silenced. He believed that once again he could exhibit what history has already witnessed, the world subject to a "People-King," but that royalty was to be represented in his own person. A combination of Eastern and Roman institutions, bearing also some resemblance to the times of Charlemagne, was to transform the sovereigns of Europe into great feudatories of

the French Empire; and perhaps, if the sea had not effectually preserved England from invasion, this gigantic project might have been carried out.

Shortly after, the Emperor laid the foundation-stone of this brain-built edifice. I allude to the union of the Iron Crown with that of France.

On the 17th of March, Signor de Melzi, Vice-President of the Italian Republic, accompanied by the principal members of the Council of State and a numerous deputation of presidents of the electoral colleges, deputies from the Corps Législatif, and other important persons, were received by the Emperor on his throne, and submitted to him the ardent desire of the Council that he would graciously consent to reign over the ultramontane Republic also. "Our present Government," said the Vice-President, "cannot continue, because it throws us behind the age in which we live. Constitutional Monarchy is everywhere indicated by the finger of progress.

"The Italian Republic claims a King, and her interests demand that this King should be Napoleon, on the condition that the two crowns shall be united on his head only, and that so soon as the Mediterranean is once more free, he will himself nominate a successor of his own blood."

Bonaparte replied that he had always laboured for the welfare of Italy; that for this end he would accept the crown, because he believed that any other

course would just now be fatal to her independence; and that, afterwards, when the time came for so doing, he would gladly place the Iron Crown on some younger head, as he should always be ready to sacrifice himself for the interests of the States over which he was called to reign.

On the following day, the 18th of March, he proceeded to the Senate in state, and announced both the request of the Council and his own consent. Signor de Melzi and all the Italians took the oaths, and the Senate approved and applauded as usual. The Emperor concluded his speech by declaring that the genius of evil would seek in vain to rekindle the fire of war on the Continent; that which had been united to the Empire would remain united.

He doubtless foresaw that this event would be the occasion of an early war, at least with the Emperor of Austria, which, however, he was far from dreading. The army was becoming weary of inaction; the invasion of England was too perilous. It might be that favourable circumstances would render the landing possible, but how could the army maintain its footing afterwards, in a country where reinforcement would be well-nigh impossible? And in case of failure, what would be the chances of retreat? It may be observed, in the history of Bonaparte, that he always contrived to avoid a positively hopeless position as far as possible, and especially for himself

personally. A war, therefore, would serve his purpose, by relieving him from this project of invasion, which, from the moment he renounced it, became ridiculous.

During the same session, the State of Piombino was given to the Princess Elisa. On announcing this to the Senate, Bonaparte stated that the principality had been badly governed for several years; that the interests of France were concerned, on account of the facilities which it offered for communication with the Island of Elba and with Corsica; and that the gift was not a token of special affection, but an act in accordance with a wise policy, with the splendour of the crown, and with the interests of nations.

As a proof that these gifts of the Emperor were in the nature of fiefs, the Imperial decree was to the effect that the children of Madame Bacciochi, on succeeding to their mother, should receive investiture from the Emperor of the French; that they should not marry without his consent; and that the Princess's husband, who was to assume the title of Prince of Piombino, should take the following oath:—

"I swear fidelity to the Emperor; I promise to aid with my whole power the garrison of the Island of Elba; and I declare that I will not cease, under any circumstances, to fulfil the duties of a

good and faithful subject towards his Majesty, the Emperor of the French."

A few days after this, the Pope solemnly baptized the second son of Louis Bonaparte, who was held at the font by his father and mother. This great ceremony took place at Saint Cloud. The park was illuminated on the occasion, and public games were provided for the people. In the evening there was a numerous reception, and a first performance of "Athalie" at the theatre at Saint Cloud.

Racine's great tragedy had not been performed since the Revolution. The Emperor, who admitted he had never been impressed by reading the play, was much struck by its representation, and repeated, on that occasion, that he greatly wished such a tragedy might be written during his own reign. He gave leave that it should be performed in Paris; and thenceforth most of our great plays resumed their place on the stage, whence they had been prudently banished by the Revolution.

Some few lines, nevertheless, were cut out, lest application might be made of them to present circumstances. Luc de Lancival, the author of "Hector," and shortly afterwards, Esménard, author of "Le Poème de la Navigation," were entrusted with the task of revising Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire. But, with all due respect to these precautionary measures of a too careful police, the

missing lines, like the statues of Brutus and Cassius, were all the more conspicuous by their absence.

In consequence of the momentous decision he had arrived at, the Emperor announced that he would speedily proceed to Italy, and fixed the epoch of his coronation for the month of May. He convened the Italian Legislature for the same date, and issued several decrees and ordinances relating to the new customs to be established in Italy.

He also appointed Ladies-in-Waiting and Chamberlains to attend on his mother; and among others M. de Cossé-Brissac, who had solicited that favour. At the same time Prince Borghèse was declared a French citizen, and the Ladies-in-Waiting received an accession to their number in Madame de Canisy, one of the most beautiful women of her time.

Madame Murat gave birth to a child just at this time; she was then residing at the Hôtel Thélusson, at the end of the Rue d'Artois. It was observed on this occasion that the luxuriousness of the new Princesses was continually on the increase, and yet it had not then reached the height which it has since attained. Madame Murat's bedchamber was hung with pink satin, the bed and window curtains were of the same material, and all these hangings were trimmed with broad and very fine lace, instead of fringe.

The preparations for the Emperor's departure

soon occupied us exclusively. This event was fixed for the 2nd of April, when the Pope was also to leave Paris; and a few days previously M. de Rémusat started for Milan, in charge of the regalia and the Crown diamonds, which were to be used at the coronation. This was for me the beginning of troubles, and they were destined to recur for some years. I had never before been separated from my husband, and I was so much accustomed to the enjoyments of my home, that I found it hard to be deprived of them. It made the Court life to which I was condemned more irksome, and was very painful to my husband also, who, like myself, fell into the error of letting his feelings be perceived. I have already said that a courtier is a failure, if he suffer any feelings to divert his attention from the minutiæ which constitute his duties.

My distress at my husband's departure on a journey which seemed to me distant, and even dangerous—for my imagination exaggerated everything regarding him—made me desirous that he should be accompanied by a friend of ours, named Salembemi, who had formerly been an officer in the navy. He was badly off—had only the salary of some small appointment to live on, with what M. de Rémusat, who employed him as his secretary, paid him. To him I confided the care of my

husband's health. He was a clever man, but difficult to deal with, somewhat malicious, and of a peevish temper. He was the cause of more than one of our troubles, and this is why I now make mention of him.*

My delicate health made it impossible to include me in the suite. The Empress seemed to regret this. As for myself, I was, on the whole, glad of a rest after the busy life I had been leading, and happy to remain with my mother and my children.†

* M. Salembemi, who had a ready pen, wrote freely from Italy, and dwelt rather on the scandals of the Court than on politics. His letters were opened and shown to the Emperor, who ordered him to leave within twenty-four hours. His disgrace caused some vexation to my grandfather. Although a certain constraint may be observed in the correspondence of the author of these Memoirs, and many phrases are inserted for the purpose of contenting a jealous master, it is probable that the letters of the husband and wife were also regarded as too free in expression for courtiers. We know that the hateful custom of opening letters was transmitted from the First to the Second Empire, and it is a curious coincidence that, on the 4th of September, 1870, a letter addressed to my father by my mother was discovered in a drawer of the writing-table of the Emperor Napoleon III. That letter was, however, evidently written without any fear of the post-office.—P. R.

† My grandmother, whose health had always been delicate, now began to be seriously indisposed, and unable for any exertion. Her disposition became influenced by this. She lost none of her goodness, but her composure, serenity, and gaiety failed her. She suffered frequently from nervous attacks, which, together with her naturally vivid imagination, rendered her more liable to disquiet and melancholy. The journey

Mesdames de la Rochefoucauld, D'Arberg, De Serrant, and Savary, a considerable number of Chamberlains, the great officers, and, in short, a numerous and youthful Court, accompanied the Empress. The Emperor started on the 2nd, and the Pope on the 4th of April. At every stage of his journey to Rome his Holiness received tokens of great respect; and he then, no doubt, believed he was bidding adieu to France for ever.

Murat remained as Governor of Paris, and with a charge of superintendence which he extended over everything, but his reports, I think, were not always impartial. Fouché, who was more liberal, if I may use the expression, in the exercise of his police functions, and who was well entitled to consider himself necessary, carried things with a high hand, but was conciliatory to all parties, according to his system of making himself useful to everybody.

The Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès also remained as Director of the Council of State—an office of which he acquitted himself well—and to do the honours

undertaken by her husband, although differing so much from the dangerous exploits of the time, and, in fact, little more than a pleasure-trip, troubled her to a degree which can hardly be believed nowadays, and astonished even the most romantic women of a period so far removed from ours. A worldly life, and especially a Court life, became more and more distasteful to her.

of Paris. He received a good deal of company, welcoming them with a gloomy civility which gave him an almost ridiculous air.

Paris and France were at that time in repose; all things seemed to work together for order, and the general state of subjection to be complete. The Emperor went first to Champagne. He passed a day at the fine old château of Brienne, in order that he might visit the scenes of his childhood. Madame de Brienne professed extreme enthusiasm for him, and, as worship was not displeasing to him, he behaved to her with great amiability.

It was amusing, just then, to see some of her kinsfolk at Paris receiving the lively letters she wrote to them on this Imperial visit. However, as she described events, these letters produced a good effect in what we call here "good society." Success is easy to the powerful; they must needs be very ill natured or very blundering when they fail to please.

A few days after all these departures, the following paragraph appeared in the *Moniteur:* "Monsieur Jérôme Bonaparte has arrived at Lisbon, on board an American vessel. Among the passengers are Mr. and Miss Patterson. M. Jérôme immediately took the post for Madrid. Mr. and Miss Patterson have re-embarked. It is understood that they have

returned to America." * I believe that they crossed to England.†

This Mr. Patterson was no other than the father-in-law of Jérôme, who, having fallen in love while in America with the daughter of an American merchant, had made her his wife, persuading himself that, after some displeasure on his brother's part, he should obtain his forgiveness. But Bonaparte, who was already forming other projects for his family, was highly incensed, annulled the marriage, and forced his brother to an immediate separation. Jérôme travelled to Italy, and joined him at Turin, but was very badly received. He was ordered to join one of our fleets then cruising in the Mediterranean; remained at sea for a considerable time, and was not restored to favour until several months afterwards.

Throughout all France the Emperor was welcomed with genuine enthusiasm. He stayed at Lyons, where he secured the good will of the traders by issuing

* The Emperor announced the return of his brother to the Minister of the Admiralty, Vice-Admiral Décrès, in the following terms:—

"Milan, 23rd Florial, year 13 (13th May, 1805).

"MONSIEUR DÉCRÈS,

"M. Jérôme has arrived. Mademoiselle Patterson has returned to America. He has owned his fault, and does not recognize this person as his wife. He promises miracles of good behaviour. Meanwhile I have sent him to Genoa for some time."—P. R.

† See Appendix.

decrees favourable to their interests. He crossed Mont Cenis and remained a few days at Turin.

Meanwhile M. de Rémusat had reached Milan, where he met Prince Eugène, who received him with his characteristic cordiality. The Prince questioned my husband as to what had taken place in Paris since he had left that city, and succeeded in eliciting some details concerning Madame de X——, which were very grievous to his feelings. M. de Rémusat wrote to me that, pending the arrival of the Court, he was leading a tolerably quiet life. He explored Milan, which seemed to him a dull town, and its palace was dull also. The inhabitants showed little affection for the French. The nobles shut themselves up in their houses, under the pretext that they were not rich enough to do the honours of the place in a fitting style. Prince Eugène endeavoured to collect them about him, but succeeded imperfectly. The Italians, still in a state of suspense, did not know whether to rejoice or repine at the novel destiny that we had forced upon them.

M. de Rémusat sent me at this period some rather curious details of the life of the Milanese. Their ignorance of all that constitutes agreeable society; the absolute non-existence among them of family life, the husbands, strangers to their wives, leaving them to the care of a *cavaliere servente*; the dullness of the theatres; the darkness of the house, whither

people go in morning-dress, to occupy themselves in the half-closed boxes with anything rather than listening to the opera; the want of variety in the performances; the difference between the costumes and those of France—all these things gave M. de Rémusat matter for remarks, all to the advantage of our beloved country, while they also increased his desire to return to France and to me.

During this time the Emperor was revisiting the scenes of his former victories. He held a grand review on the battle-field of Marengo, and distributed crosses on that occasion. The troops who had been massed together on the pretext of this review, and remained afterwards in the neighbourhood of the Adige, furnished a reason or pretext on which the Austrian Government strengthened their already very powerful line of defence behind this river; and French policy took offence at these precautions.

On the 9th of May the Emperor reached Milan. His presence caused great excitement in the town, and the circumstances attending the coronation aroused the same ambition as they had caused in Paris. The highest nobles of Milan began to long for the new distinctions and the advantages appertaining to them; independence and unity of government were held out to the Italians, and they eagerly indulged in the hopes extended to them.

Immediately on the arrival of the Court at Milan,

I was struck by the dismal tone of M. de Rémusat's letters, and soon afterwards I learned that he was suffering from his master's displeasure. The naval officer of whom I have spoken, a satirical spectator of what was going on at Milan, having taken it into his head to write to Paris some lively and rather sarcastic accounts of what was passing before his eyes, his letters had been opened, and M. de Rémusat was ordered to send him back to Paris. He was not at first told the reason for this order, and it was only at a later period that he learned its cause. The displeasure of the Emperor was not confined to the secretary; it fell also on him who had brought him to Italy.

Besides this, Prince Eugène let fall some of the details he had obtained in confidence from my husband; and, finally, it was discovered from our letters, as I have said before, that our thoughts and aspirations were not entirely centred in the interests of our places at Court. These causes were sufficient to anger a master who was by nature irascible; and so, according to his custom of using men for his own advantage, when they could be useful to him, whatever might be his feelings towards them, he exacted from my husband a service of the most rigid punctuality, because the length of time M. de Rémusat had passed at Court had given him experience in a ceremonial which daily became more

minute, and to which the Emperor attached greater importance. At the same time he treated him with harshness and severity, repeating continually to those who, with good reason, would praise the high and estimable qualities of my husband: "All that you say may be true, but he does not belong to me as I wish him to belong to me." This reproach was always on his lips during the years we passed in his service, and perhaps there is some merit in our never having ceased to deserve it.

This Court life, so busy and yet so idle, gave M. de Talleyrand and M. de Rémusat an opportunity of becoming better acquainted, and was the beginning of an intimacy which at a later period caused me many and various emotions.

The fine tact of M. de Talleyrand discerned the right-mindedness and the keenness of observation of my husband; they agreed on a multitude of subjects, and the difference of their dispositions did not prevent them from enjoying an interchange of ideas. One day, M. de Talleyrand said to M. de Rémusat, "I can see that you distrust me, and I know from whence your caution proceeds. We serve a master who does not like intimacies. When he appointed us both to the same service, he foresaw there might be friendship between us. You are a clever man, and that is enough to make him wish that you and I should remain apart. He therefore

prejudiced you in some way against me, and he also tried, by I know not what reports, to put me on my guard. It will not be his fault if we do not remain strangers to one another. This is one of his weaknesses, and we must recognize, indulge, and excuse, without however submitting to it." This straightforward way of speaking, enhanced by the graceful manner which M. de Talleyrand knows so well how to assume when he likes, pleased my husband, who, moreover, found in this friendship some alleviation of the weariness of his life.*

At this period M. de Rémusat perceived that M. de Talleyrand, who had influence over Bona-

* This mutual distrust between his Great Chamberlain and his First Chamberlain, originated and kept up by the Emperor, was slow in dying out; and, notwithstanding the good will of both, no real intimacy existed between them until the following year, during the tour in Germany. After the first advances had been made by M. de Talleyrand, my grandfather wrote to his wife in the following terms, in a letter dated Milan, 17th Floréal, year 13 (7th May, 1805):—"M. de Talleyrand has been here for the last week. It only depends on myself to believe him my best friend. In words he seems friendship itself. I often go to see him. He takes my arm whenever he happens to meet me, and talks with me in a low voice for two or three hours at a time; he tells me various things which have every appearance of being confidential, interests himself in my career, talks to me about it, and wants me to be distinguished among all the other Chamberlains. Tell me, my dear one, am I really held in esteem, or does he want to play me a trick?" Shortly after this, his language completely changed, and the friendship became intimate and affectionate on both sides.—P. R.

parte because he was of use to him, was jealous of Fouché, whom he disliked. He entertained a positive contempt for M. Maret, and gratified it by the biting sarcasm in which he habitually indulged, and which few could escape. Although under no delusion regarding Bonaparte, he nevertheless served him well; for he tried to restrain his passions by the position in which he placed him, both with respect to foreign affairs and in France; and he also advised him to create certain institutions which would control him. The Emperor, who, as I have said, liked to create, and who seized rapidly upon anything novel and impressive, would follow the advice of M. de Talleyrand, and, in concert with him, would lay the foundation of some useful enterprise. But afterwards, his domineering temper, his suspicion, his dread of finding himself restrained, made him afraid of the action of that which he had himself created, and, with sudden caprice, he would abruptly suspend or relinquish the work he had begun. M. de Talleyrand was provoked by this; but, as he was naturally indolent and careless, and did not possess in himself those qualities of strength and perseverance which enable a man to carry his points in detail, he usually ended by neglecting and abandoning the fatiguing task of solicitude and superintendence. The sequence of events will, however, explain all this better than I can in this place.

Meantime, war broke out between England and Spain, and we were frequently, sometimes successfully, engaged at sea. A fleet which sailed out from Toulon found means to join the Spanish squadron, and the press exulted loudly over this feat.*

On the 30th of May, Bonaparte was crowned King of Italy, with great pomp. The ceremony was similar to that which had taken place in Paris. The Empress sat in a gallery and beheld the spectacle. M. de Rémusat told me that a thrill of emotion passed over the crowd in the church, at the moment when Bonaparte, taking hold of the Iron Crown, and placing it on his head, uttered in a threatening voice the antique formula, "Il cielo me la diéde, guai à chi la toccherà!" The remainder of the Emperor's stay at Milan was divided between attending fêtes and issuing decrees for the regulation and administration of his new kingdom. Rejoicings took place all over France in honour of the event; and yet it caused great apprehension among many people, who foresaw that war with Austria would result from it.

On the 4th of June the Doge of Genoa arrived at Milan. He came to beg that his Republic might be

* This passage refers to the achievement of Admiral Villeneuve, who, having set sail on the 30th of March, contrived to get clear of the port of Toulon without encountering the English fleet.—P. R.

united to the Empire; and this action, which had been concerted or commanded beforehand, was made the occasion of a grand reception and state ceremony. That portion of Italy was at once divided into new departments, and shortly afterwards the new constitution was sent to the Italian Legislature, and Prince Eugène was made Viceroy of the kingdom. The order of the Iron Crown was created; and, the distributions being made, the Emperor left Milan and set out on a journey which, under the appearance of a pleasure-trip, was in reality undertaken for the purpose of reconnoitring the Austrian forces on the line of the Adige.

By the treaty of Campo Formio Bonaparte had abandoned the Venetian States to the Emperor of Austria, and the latter thus became a formidable neighbour to the kingdom of Italy. On his arrival at Verona, he received a visit from Baron Vincent, who commanded the Austrian garrison in that portion of the town which belonged to his sovereign. The Baron was commissioned to inform himself of the state of our forces in Italy; the Emperor, on his part, observing those of the foreigner. On inspecting the banks of the Adige, he perceived that forts would have to be constructed for the defence of the river; but, on calculating the necessary time and expense, he said that it would be better and quicker to push the Austrians back

from that frontier altogether. From that moment we may believe that he had resolved upon the war which, a few months later, was declared.

It was impossible that the Emperor of Austria should regard the acquisition by France of so much power in Italy with indifference; and the English Government, which was making great efforts to stir up a continental war against us, availed itself of the uneasiness of the Emperor of Austria, and the dissatisfaction which was by degrees impairing the cordiality of our relations with Russia. The English newspapers hastened to assert that the Emperor had held a review of his troops in Italy for the sole purpose of putting them on the footing of a formidable enemy; and thenceforth movements began in the Austrian army. Those appearances of peace which were still observed up to the time of the rupture were in reality preparations by both Emperors, who at that period had become almost declared enemies.

CHAPTER XIII.

1805.

Fêtes at Verona and Genoa—Cardinal Maury—My retired life in the country—Madame Louis Bonaparte—"Les Templiers"—The Emperor's return—His amusements—The marriage of M. de Talleyrand—War is declared.

THE Emperor visited Cremona, Verona, Mantua, Bologna, Modena, Parma, and Piacenza, and then went to Genoa, where he was received with enthusiasm. He sent for Le Brun, the Arch-Treasurer, and entrusted to him the task of superintending the new administration to be established in that city. At Genoa also he parted with his sister Elisa, who had accompanied him on his journey, and to whom he gave the little Republic of Lucca, adding to it the States of Piombino. At this period the French began once more to wear foreign decorations. Prussian, Bavarian, and Spanish orders were sent to the Emperor, to be distributed by him at his pleasure. He divided them among his great officers, some of his Ministers, and a few of his Marshals.

At Verona a fight between dogs and bulls was

given, for the entertainment of the Emperor, in the ancient amphitheatre, which contained forty thousand spectators. Loud applause greeted his arrival, and he was really affected by this reception, rendered impressive by the place, and by the magnitude of the crowd. The fêtes at Genoa were very magnificent. Floating gardens were constructed on huge flat barges; these gardens led to a floating temple, which, approaching the land, received Bonaparte and his Court. Then the barges, which were all fastened together, were set in motion, and the Emperor found himself on a beautiful island in the middle of the harbour, from whence he had a complete view of Genoa, and of the simultaneous displays of fireworks from various parts of the splendidly illuminated city.

M. de Talleyrand found amusement entirely to his taste during his stay at Genoa; for he was always pleased to detect an absurdity and to point it out to others. Cardinal Maury, who had retired to Rome since his emigration, had gained a great reputation there, by the firmness of his attitude in our famous Constituent Assembly. Nevertheless, he was desirous of returning to France, and M. de Talleyrand wrote to him from Genoa, advising him to come at once and present himself to the Emperor. The Cardinal acted upon this, and immediately assuming that obsequious attitude which he has ever since scrupu-

lously retained, he entered Genoa, loudly proclaiming that he had come to see "the great man."

He obtained an audience. "The great man" took his measure very quickly, and, while esteeming him at his proper value, resolved to make him give a complete contradiction to his past conduct. He gained him over easily by flattering him a little, and induced him to return to France, where we have since seen him play a somewhat ridiculous part. M. de Talleyrand, whose recollections of the Constituent Assembly were not effaced, took many opportunities of wreaking a petty revenge upon the Cardinal, by bringing out his silly sycophancy with great skill and effect.

While the Emperor was thus travelling through Italy and consolidating his power, and everybody around him was getting tired of the continual full-dress parade at which he kept his Court; while the Empress, happy in the elevation of her son, and yet grieved by her separation from him, amused herself and distracted her mind by the perpetual fêtes given in her honour, and took pleasure in exhibiting her magnificent jewels and her elegant costumes, I was leading a quiet and pleasant life in the Valley of Montmorency, at the house of Madame d'Houdetôt. I have already mentioned this amiable and accomplished woman. Her recollections enabled me to reconstruct in my imagination those days of

which she loved to talk. It gave me great pleasure to hear her speak of the famous philosophers whom she had known, and whose ways and sayings she remembered so clearly. I was so full of the "Confessions" of Jean Jacques Rousseau, that I was not a little surprised to find her somewhat cold in her appreciation of him; and I may say, in passing, that the opinion of Madame d'Houdetôt, who would, I should think, have regarded Rousseau with exceptional indulgence, contributed not a little to make me distrust his character, and believe that he was only great in point of talent.*

During the absence of the Court, Paris was quiet and dull. The Imperial family were living in the country. I sometimes saw Madame Louis Bonaparte at Saint Leu, a place which her husband had just bought. Louis appeared to occupy himself exclusively with his garden. His wife was lonely, ill, and always afraid of letting some word at which he might be offended escape her. She had not ventured either to rejoice at the elevation of Prince Eugène, nor to weep for his absence, which was, of course, indefinite. She wrote to him seldom and briefly, because she knew that the privacy of her letters was not respected. On one occasion, when I was visiting her, she told me a rumour had

* For a note on this passage by M. Paul de Rémusat, see Appendix.

arisen that the Duc de Polignac and his brother, who were imprisoned in the Château of Ham, had attempted to escape; that they had been transferred to the Temple; and that Madame Bonaparte and myself were accused of being concerned in the affair. This accusation, of which Madame Louis suspected Murat to be the author, was utterly unfounded. Madame Bonaparte never gave a thought to the two prisoners, and I had entirely lost sight of the Duchesse de Polignac.

I lived in the strictest retirement, so that my solitude might supply a sufficient answer to any gossip concerning my conduct; but I was more and more distressed by the necessity for taking such precautions, and especially at being unable to use the position in which I was placed for any purposes of utility to the Emperor, to myself, or to those persons who wished to obtain certain favours from him through me. There was no want of kindness in my natural disposition; and, besides that, I felt a degree of pride, which I do not think was misplaced, in serving those who had formerly blamed me, and in silencing their criticisms of my conduct by favours which could not be said to lack generosity. I also believed that the Emperor might win many persons who now held aloof, by the permission which he had granted me to bring their solicitations and their necessities

under his attention, and as I was still attached to him, although he inspired me with more fear than formerly, I would have gained all hearts for him, had it been possible. But as it became evident that my plan was not always approved by him, I found I had to think of defending myself, rather than assisting others.

My reflections were occasionally sad; but at other times I could make up my mind to the difficulties of my position, and resolve that I would only look at the agreeable side of it. I enjoyed a certain consideration in society, and I liked that; and we were fairly prosperous, though not free from the difficulties which always beset persons whose fortunes have no secure basis, and whose expenses are obligatory. But I was young, and I thought little of the future. I was surrounded by pleasant society; my mother was perfection to me, my husband most kind and good, my eldest son all I could wish. I lived on the pleasantest terms with my kind and charming sister. All this turned away my thoughts from the Court, and enabled me to bear the drawbacks of my position patiently. My health was a perpetual trial to me; it was always delicate, and an unquiet life was evidently injurious. I must not, however, dwell upon myself; I do not know how I have been tempted into doing so; if ever this narrative should be read by others,

as well as by my son, all this ought to be suppressed without hesitation.*

During the Emperor's sojourn in Italy, two plays were acted with success by the Comédie Française. The first was "Le Tartuffe des Mœurs," translated, or rather adapted, from Sheridan's "School for Scandal," by M. Chéron; the second was "Les Templiers." M. Chéron had been a deputy to the Legislative Assembly. He married a niece of the Abbé Morellet; his wife and himself were intimate friends of mine. The Abbé had written to the Emperor to solicit a place for M. Chéron; and, on Bonaparte's return, "Le Tartuffe des Mœurs" was acted before him. He was so much amused by the play, that, having ascertained the name of its author from M. de Rémusat, and also learned that M. Chéron was well deserving of employment, he, in a moment of easy good nature, sent him to Poitiers as Prefect. Unfortunately, he died there, three years afterwards. His widow is a most estimable and talented person.

M. de Fontanes had read "Les Templiers" to Bonaparte, who approved of some portion of the piece, but objected to others. He wished to have certain corrections made, but the author refused, and the Emperor was annoyed. He was by no

* Notwithstanding the above injunction, my readers will not be surprised that I have retained these personal details, which lend a particular interest to the narrative.—P. R.

means pleased that "Les Templiers" had a brilliant success, and set himself against both the play and the author, with a petty despotism which was characteristic of him when either persons or things incurred his displeasure. All this happened when he came back.*

Bonaparte expected that his wishes and his opinions should be accepted as rules. He had taken a fancy to the music of "Les Bardes," an opera by Lesueur, and he was angry because the Parisian public did not think as highly of it as he did.

The Emperor came direct from Genoa to Paris. This was to be his last sight of fair Italy, that land

* It was not until his return to Paris that the Emperor displayed the ill humour which the Memoirs record. On the 1st of June, 1805, he wrote from Milan to M. Fouché, as follows: —"It seems to me that the success of 'Les Templiers' leads the people to dwell upon this point of French history. That is well, but I do not think it would be wise to allow pieces taken from historical subjects of a period too close to our own times, to be acted. I read in a newspaper that it is proposed to act a tragedy on the subject of Henry IV. That epoch is near enough to ours to arouse popular passions. The stage requires antiquity, and, without restricting the theatre too much, I think you ought to prevent this, but not to allow your interference to appear. You might speak of it to M. Raynouard, who seems to be a man of ability. Why should you not induce him to write a tragedy upon the transition from the first to the second line? Instead of being a tyrant, he who should succeed to that would be the saviour of the nation. The oratorio of 'Saul' is no other than this; it is a great man succeeding a degenerate king."

in which he seemed to have exhausted every mode of impressing the minds of men, as a general, as a pacificator, and as a sovereign. He returned by Mont Cenis, and gave orders for great works which, like those of the Simplon Pass, were to facilitate communication between the two nations. The Court was increased in number; several Italian noblemen and ladies were attached to it. The Emperor had already appointed some Belgians as additional Chamberlains, and the obsequious forms in which he was addressed were now uttered in widely varying accents.

He arrived at Fontainebleau on the 11th of July, and went from thence to reside at Saint Cloud. Shortly after, the *Moniteur* began to bristle with notes, announcing in almost threatening language the storm so soon to burst over Europe. Certain expressions which occurred from time to time in these notes revealed the author who had dictated them. One of these in particular made an impression on my memory.

It had been stated in the English newspapers that a supposed genealogy of the Bonaparte family, which traced its nobility to an ancient origin, had been printed in London.

"Researches of this kind are purposeless," said the note. "To all those who may ask from what period dates the House of Bonaparte, there is a ready answer: 'It dates from the 18th Brûmaire.'"

I met the Emperor after his return with mingled feelings. It was difficult not to be affected by his presence, but it was painful to me to feel that my gladness was tempered by the distrust with which he was beginning to inspire me.* The Empress received me in a most friendly manner, and I avowed to her quite frankly the trouble that was on my mind. I expressed my surprise that no past proof of devotedness or disinterested service could avail with her husband against a sudden prejudice. She repeated my words to him, and he well understood what they meant; but he persisted in his own definition of what he called devotedness, which was an entire surrender of one's being, of one's sentiments and one's opinions, and repeated that we ought to give up all our former habits, in order to have only one thought, that of his interest and his will. He promised, in recompense for this exaction, that we should be raised to a great height of rank and fortune, and have everything that could gratify our pride. "I will give them," said he, speaking of us, "enough to enable them to laugh at those who find fault with them now, and if they will break with my enemies, I will put their enemies under their feet." Apart from this, I had but little annoyance in the household, and my position was easy enough, as Bonaparte's mind was fixed on

* For a fuller explanation of this passage, see Appendix.

important affairs during his stay in France before the campaign of Austerlitz. A circumstance recurs to my memory at this moment, which is only important because it serves to depict this strange man. I therefore give it a place here. The despotism of his will grew in proportion to the enlargement of the circle with which he surrounded himself; he wanted to be the sole arbiter of reputations, to make them and to unmake them at his pleasure. He branded a man, or blighted a woman, with a word, without any kind of hesitation, but he was much displeased that the public should venture to observe and to comment on the conduct of either the one or the other, if he had placed them within the rays of the aureole with which he surrounded himself.

During his journey in Italy, the idleness of life in palaces and its opportunities had given rise to several gallant adventures on his part, which were more or less serious, and these had been duly reported in France, where they fed the general appetite for gossip. One day, when several ladies of the Court—among them those who had been in Italy—were breakfasting with the Empress, Bonaparte came suddenly into the room, and leaning on the back of his wife's chair, addressed to one or another of us a few words, at first insignificant enough. Then he began to question us about what we were all doing,

and let us know, but only by hints, that some among us were very lightly spoken of by the public. The Empress, who knew her husband's ways, and was aware that, when talking in this manner, he was apt to go very far, tried to interrupt him; but the Emperor, persisting in the conversation, presently gave it an exceedingly embarrassing turn. "Yes, ladies, you occupy the attention of the worthy inhabitants of the Faubourg St. Germain. They say, for instance, that you, Madame ——, have a *liaison* with M. ——; that you, Madame ——" and so he went on, addressing himself to three or four ladies in succession. The effect upon us all of such an attack may easily be imagined. The Emperor was amused by the confusion into which he threw us. "But," added he, "you need not suppose that I approve of talk of this kind. To attack my Court is to attack myself, and I do not choose that a word shall be said, either of me, or of my family, or of my Court." While thus speaking, his countenance, which had previously been smiling, darkened, and his voice became extremely harsh. He then declaimed violently against that section of Parisian society which was still rebellious, declaring that he would exile every woman who should say a word against any Lady-in-Waiting; and he proceeded to work himself into a furious passion upon this text, which he had entirely to himself,

for not a single one of us attempted to make him an answer. The Empress at length rose from the table in order to terminate this unpleasant scene, and the general movement put an end to it. The Emperor left the room as suddenly as he had come in. One of our ladies, a sworn admirer of everything that Bonaparte said and did, began to expatiate upon the kindness of such a master, who desired that our reputation should be held a sacred thing. But Madame de ——, a very clever woman, answered her impatiently, "Yes, madame, let the Emperor only defend us once again in that fashion, and we are lost."

Bonaparte was greatly surprised when the Empress represented to him the absurdity of this scene, and he always insisted that we ought to have been grateful for the readiness with which he took offence when we were attacked.

During his stay at Saint Cloud, he worked incessantly, and issued a great number of decrees relative to the administration of the new departments he had acquired in Italy. He also augmented his Council of State, to which he gave more influence from day to day, because he was quite sure of having it completely under his authority. He showed himself at the Opera, and was well received by the Parisians, whom, however, he still thought cold, in comparison with the people of the provinces. He led a busy

and laborious life, sometimes allowing himself the recreation of hunting; but he walked out for one hour a day only, and received company on but one day in each week. On that day the Comédie Française came to Saint Cloud, and acted tragedies or comedies in a very pretty theatre which had been recently built. Then began the difficulties of M. de Rémusat in providing amusement for him whom Talleyrand called "the Unamusable." In vain were the masterpieces of our theatrical *répertoire* performed; in vain did our best actors strive their very best to please him: he generally appeared at these representations preoccupied and weighed down by the gravity of his thoughts. He laid the blame of his own want of attention to the play on his First Chamberlain, on Corneille, or Racine, or on the actors. He liked Talma's acting, or rather Talma himself—there had been some sort of acquaintance between them during his obscure youth—he gave him a great deal of money, and received him familiarly; but even Talma could not succeed in interesting him. Just like an invalid, who blames others for the state of his own health, he was angry with those who could enjoy those pleasures which passed him by; and he always thought that by scolding and worrying he should get something invented which would succeed in amusing him. The man who was entrusted with Bonaparte's plea-

sures was very seriously to be pitied; unfortunately for us, M. de Rémusat was the man, and I could not describe what he had to bear.

At this time the Emperor was still flattering himself that he would be able to gain some naval triumphs over the English. The united French and Spanish fleets made several efforts, and an attempt was made to defend the colonies. Admiral Nelson, pursuing us everywhere, no doubt upset the greater part of our plans, but this was carefully concealed, and our newspapers taught us to believe that we were beating the English every day. It is likely that the project of the invasion was abandoned. The English Government was raising up formidable enemies for us upon the Continent. The Emperor of Russia, who was young and naturally inclined to independence, was perhaps already tempted to resent the preponderance that our Emperor desired to exercise, and some of his Ministers were suspected of favouring the English policy, which aimed at making him our enemy. The peace with Austria held only by a thread. The King of Prussia alone seemed resolved to maintain his alliance with us. "Why," said a note in the *Moniteur*, "while the Emperor of Russia exercises his influence upon the Porte, should he object to that of France being exercised upon certain portions of Italy? When with Herschel's telescope he observes from the

terrace of his palace that which passes between the Emperor of the French and a few Apennine populations, why should he exact that the Emperor of the French shall not see what is passing in the ancient empire of Solyman, and in Persia? It is the fashion to accuse France of ambition, and yet how great has been her past moderation," etc., etc.

In the month of August the Emperor set out for Boulogne. It was no longer his purpose to inspect the flotillas, but he intended to review that numerous army encamped in the north, which before long he was destined to set in motion. During his absence the Empress made an excursion to the baths of Plombières. I think I shall usefully employ this interval of leisure by retracing my steps, in order to mention certain particulars concerning M. de Talleyrand which I have hitherto omitted.

Talleyrand, who had come back to France some time before, was appointed "Minister of External Relations," through the influence of Madame de Staël, who induced Barras, the Director, to select him for that post.* It was under the Directory that he first made the acquaintance of Madame Grand. Although she was no longer very young, this lady, who was born in the East Indies, was still remarkable for her beauty. She wished to go to England, where her

* On the 15th of July, 1797. He had returned to France in September, 1795.—P. R.

husband resided, and she applied to M. de Talleyrand for a passport. Her beauty and her visit produced, apparently, such an effect upon him that either the passport was not given, or it remained unused. Madame Grand remained in Paris; and shortly afterwards she was observed to frequent the "Hotel of External Relations;" after a short time she took up her abode there. Meanwhile, Bonaparte was First Consul; his victories and his treaties had brought the ambassadors of the first Powers in Europe and a crowd of other foreigners to Paris. Persons who were obliged by their position to frequent M. de Talleyrand's society, accepted the presence of Madame Grand, who did the honours of his table and his salon with a good grace; but they were somewhat surprised at the weakness which had consented to put so prominently forward a woman who was indeed handsome, but so deficient in education and so faulty in temper, that she was continually annoying Talleyrand by her foolish conduct, and disturbing him by her uncertain humour. M. de Talleyrand has a very good temper, and was easy-going in everyday life. The way to rule him was by frightening him, because he hates a disturbance, and so Madame Grand ruled him alike by her charms and her exactions. When, however, the ambassadresses were in question, difficulties arose, as some of them would not consent to be received at the Hotel of

External Relations by Madame Grand. She complained, and these protests on both sides came to the ears of the First Consul.

He immediately had a decisive interview on the subject with Talleyrand, and informed his Minister that he must banish Madame Grand from his house. No sooner had that lady been apprised of this decision, than she went to the Empress, whom she induced, by dint of tears and supplications, to procure for her an interview with Bonaparte. She was admitted to his presence, fell on her knees, and intreated him to revoke a decree which reduced her to despair. Bonaparte allowed himself to be moved by the tears and sobs of this fair personage, and after having quieted her, he said, "I see only one way of managing this. Let Talleyrand marry you, and all will be arranged; but you must bear his name, or you cannot appear in his house." Madame Grand was highly delighted with this decision; the Consul repeated it to Talleyrand, and gave him twenty-four hours to make up his mind. It is said that Bonaparte took a malign pleasure in making Talleyrand marry, and was secretly delighted to have this opportunity of branding his character, and thus, according to his favourite system, getting a guarantee of his fidelity. It is very possible that he may have entertained such an idea; it is also certain that the Empress, over whom tears always exercised a great

influence, used all her power with her husband to induce him to favour Madame Grand's petition.

Talleyrand went back to his hotel, gravely troubled by the prompt decision required of him. There he had to encounter tumultuous scenes. He was attacked by all the devices likely to exhaust his patience. He was pressed, pursued, urged against his inclination. Some remains of love, the power of habit, perhaps also the fear of irritating a woman whom it is impossible to suppose he had not admitted to his confidence, combined to influence him. He yielded, set out for the country, and found, in a village in the Valley of Montmorency, a curé who consented to perform the marriage ceremony. Two days afterwards we were informed that Madame Grand had become Madame de Talleyrand, and the difficulty of the Corps Diplomatique was at an end. It appears that M. Grand, who lived in England, although little desirous of recovering a wife from whom he had long been parted, contrived to get himself largely paid for withholding the protest against this marriage with which he repeatedly menaced the newly wedded couple. M. de Talleyrand, wanting something to amuse him in his own house, brought over from London the daughter of one of his friends, who on her deathbed had confided the child to him. This child was that little Charlotte who was, as we all

know, brought up in his house, and who has been very erroneously believed to be his daughter. He attached himself strongly to his young ward, educated her carefully, and, having adopted her and bestowed his name upon her, married her in her seventeenth year to his cousin, Baron de Talleyrand. The Talleyrands were at first justly annoyed by this marriage, but she ultimately succeeded in gaining their friendship.

Those persons who are acquainted with Talleyrand, and with his delicacy of taste, wit, and grace in conversation, and also know how much he needs repose, are astonished that he should have united himself with a person so uncongenial to him. It is, therefore, most likely that imperative circumstances compelled him to do so, and that Bonaparte's command, and the short time allowed him in which to come to a decision, prevented a rupture, which, in fact, would have suited him much better. What a difference it would have made for Talleyrand if he had then dissolved this illicit union, and set himself to merit and effect a future reconciliation with the Church he had abandoned! Apart from desiring for him that that reconciliation had been made then, in good faith, how much consideration would he have gained, if afterwards, when all things were reordered and replaced, he had resumed the Roman purple in the autumn of his

days, and at least repaired in the eyes of the world the scandal of his life. As a Cardinal, a noble, and a truly distinguished man, he would have had a right to respect and regard, and his course would not have been beset with difficulty and perplexity.

In the situation in which he was placed by his marriage, he had to take constant precaution to escape, as far as possible, from the ridicule which was always suspended over him. No doubt, he managed better than others might have done in such a position. Profound silence respecting his private troubles, an appearance of complete indifference to the foolish things which his wife was always saying and the blunders which she was always making, a haughty demeanour to those who ventured to smile at him or at her, extreme politeness, which was called benevolence, great social influence and political weight, a large fortune, unalterable patience under insult, and much dexterity in taking his revenge, were the weapons with which he met the general condemnation; and, notwithstanding his great faults, the public have never dared to despise him. Nevertheless, it is not to be supposed that he has not paid the private penalty of his imprudent conduct. Deprived of domestic happiness, and almost at variance with his family, who could not associate with Madame de Talleyrand, he was obliged to resort to an entirely factitious existence, in order to escape

from the dreariness of his home, and, perhaps, from the bitterness of his secret thoughts. Public affairs occupied him, and such leisure as they left him he gave to play. He was always attended by a crowd of followers, and by giving his mornings to business, his evenings to society, and his nights to cards, he never exposed himself to a tiresome *tête-à-tête* with his wife, or to the dangers of solitude, which would have brought serious reflection. Bent on getting away from himself, he never sought sleep until he was quite sure that extreme fatigue would enable him to procure it.

The Emperor did not make up by his conduct to Madame de Talleyrand for the obligation which he had imposed on him. He treated her coldly, even rudely; never admitted her to the distinctions of the rank to which she was raised, without making a difficulty about it; and did not disguise the repugnance with which she inspired him, even while Talleyrand still possessed his entire confidence. Talleyrand bore all this, never allowed the slightest complaint to escape him, and arranged so that his wife should appear but seldom at Court. She received all distinguished foreigners on certain days, and on certain other days the Government officials. She made no visits, none were exacted from her; in fact, she counted for nothing. Provided each person bowed to her on entering and leaving his salon,

Talleyrand asked no more. Let me say, in conclusion, that he always seemed to bear with perfectly resigned courage the fatal "*tu l'as voulu*" of Molière's comedy.

In the course of these Memoirs I shall have to speak of M. de Talleyrand again, when I shall have reached the period of our intimacy with him.*

I did not know Madame Grand in the prime of her life and beauty, but I have heard it said that she was one of the most charming women of her time. She was tall, and her figure had all the suppleness and grace so common to women born in the East.

* My grandparents' friendship with M. de Talleyrand, which commenced during the sojourn of my grandfather at Milan, became more intimate in the course of the same year. My grandmother wrote to her husband on the 28th of September, 1805: "I have been really pleased with the Minister. In a brief audience which he gave me he showed me much friendship, after his fashion. You may tell him that he has been very amiable, and that I have told you so; that never does any harm. I said to him, laughing, 'You must like my husband very much; that will not give you much trouble, and will give me a great deal of pleasure.' He told me that he did like you, and *I believe him.* He insists that we suffer too much from *ennui* at the Court *not to be, all of us, a little gallant. I said, 'I shall be longer about becoming so than the others, because I am not altogether stupid, and intellect is the surest safeguard.' I was inclined to say to him that he was not a proof of that, and that I felt in myself a much better defence, the dear and constant sentiment with which you have inspired me,* and which constitutes the happiness of my life, even at this moment, when it also causes a keen sorrow." That sorrow was absence.—P. R.

Her complexion was dazzling, her eyes of the brightest blue, and her slightly turned-up nose gave her, singularly enough, a look of Talleyrand himself. Her fair golden hair was of proverbial beauty. I think she was about thirty-six when she married M. de Talleyrand. The elegance of her figure was already slightly injured by her becoming stout. This afterwards increased, and by degrees her features lost their delicacy and her complexion became very red. The tone of her voice was disagreeable, her manners were abrupt; she was of an unamiable disposition, and so intolerably stupid that she never by any chance said the right thing. Talleyrand's intimate friends were the objects of her particular dislike, and they cordially detested her. Her elevation gave her little happiness, and what she had to suffer never excited anybody's interest.*

* The papal brief which relieved M. de Talleyrand from the excommunications he had incurred was considered by him as a permission to become a layman, and even to marry, although nothing of the kind was expressed in it. The reader may convince himself on this point by reading the very interesting work of Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer, which appears to me to be the most just and the most kindly view that has yet been taken of M. de Talleyrand, as regards his character, his talent, and the influence which he exercised in Europe, so often with great utility to France. The author speaks thus of Talleyrand's marriage:—"The lady whom he married, born in the East Indies, and separated from Grand, was remarkable for her beauty and for her lack of sense. Every one has heard the anecdote of her asking Sir George Robinson after his 'man

While the Emperor was reviewing the whole of his army, Madame Murat went to Boulogne to pay him a visit, and he desired that Madame Louis Bonaparte, who had accompanied her husband to the baths of Saint Amand, should also attend him there, and bring her son. On several occasions he went through the ranks of his soldiers, carrying this child in his arms. The army was then remarkably fine, strictly disciplined, full of the best spirit, well provided, and impatient for war. This desire was destined to be gratified before long.

Notwithstanding the reports in our newspapers, we were almost always stopped in everything that we attempted to do for the protection of our colonies. The proposed invasion appeared day by day more perilous. It became necessary to astonish Europe by a less doubtful novelty. "We are no longer," said the notes of the *Moniteur*, addressed to the English Government, "those Frenchmen who were sold and betrayed by perfidious ministers, covetous mistresses, and indolent kings. You march towards an inevitable destiny."

The two nations, English and French, each claimed the victory in the naval combat off Cape Finisterre, where no doubt our national bravery opposed a

Friday.' Talleyrand, however, defended his choice by saying, 'A clever woman often compromises her husband; a stupid woman only compromise herself.'"—P. R.

strong resistance to the science of the enemy, but which had no other result than to oblige our fleet to re-enter the port. Shortly afterwards our journals were full of complaints of the insults which the flag of Venice had sustained since it had become a dependency of Austria. We soon learned that the Austrian troops were moving—that an alliance between the two Emperors of Austria and Russia was formed against us; and the English journals triumphantly announced a Continental war. This year the birthday of Napoleon was celebrated with great pomp from one end of France to the other. He returned from Boulogne on the 3rd of September, and at that time the Senate issued a decree, by which the Gregorian calendar was to be resumed on the 1st of January, 1806. Thus disappeared, little by little, the last traces of the Republic, which had lasted, or appeared to last, for thirteen years.

CHAPTER XIV.

1805.

M. de Talleyrand and M. Fouché—The Emperor's speech to the Senate—The departure of the Emperor—The bulletins of the Grand Army—Poverty in Paris during the war—The Emperor and the Marshals—The Faubourg St. Germain—Trafalgar—Journey of M. de Rémusat to Vienna.

At the period of which I am writing, M. de Talleyrand was still on bad terms with M. Fouché, and, strange to say, I remember that the latter charged him with being deficient in conscientiousness and sincerity. He always remembered that on the occasion of the attempt of the 3rd Nivôse (the Infernal Machine), Talleyrand had accused him to Bonaparte of neglect, and had contributed not a little to his dismissal. On his return to the Ministry he secretly nursed his resentment, and let slip no opportunity of gratifying it, by that bitter and cynical mockery which was the habitual tone of his conversation.

Talleyrand and Fouché were two very remarkable men, and both were exceedingly useful to Bonaparte. But it would be difficult to find less resemblance, and fewer points of contact, between any two persons

placed in such close and continuous relations. The former had studiously preserved the carelessly resolute manner, if I may use that expression, of the nobles of the old régime. Acute, taciturn, measured in his speech, cold in his bearing, pleasing in conversation, deriving all his power from himself alone—for he held no party in his hand—his very faults, and even the stigma of his abandonment of his former sacred state of life, were sufficient guarantee to the Revolutionists, who knew him to be so adroit and so supple that they believed him to be always keeping the means of escaping them in reserve. Besides, he opened his mind to no one. He was quite impenetrable upon the affairs with which he was charged, and upon his own opinion of the master whom he served; and, as a final touch to this picture, he neglected nothing for his own comfort, was careful in his dress, used perfumes, and was a lover of good cheer and all the pleasures of the senses. He was never subservient to Bonaparte, but he knew how to make himself necessary to him, and never flattered him in public.

Fouché, on the contrary, was a genuine product of the Revolution. Careless of his appearance, he wore the gold lace and the ribbons which were the insignia of his dignities as if he disdained to arrange them. He could laugh at himself on occasion: he was active, animated, always restless; talkative,

affecting a sort of frankness which was merely the last degree of deceit; boasting; disposed to seek the opinion of others upon his conduct by talking about it, and sought no justification except in his contempt of a certain class of morality, or his carelessness of a certain order of approbation. But he carefully maintained, to Bonaparte's occasional disquiet, relations with a party whom the Emperor felt himself obliged to conciliate in his person. With all this, Fouché was not deficient in a sort of good fellowship; he had even some estimable qualities. He was a good husband to an ugly and stupid wife, and a very good, even a too-indulgent, father. He looked at revolution as a whole; he hated small schemes and constantly recurring suspicions, and it was because this was his way of thinking that his police did not suffice for the Emperor. Where Fouché recognized merit, he did it justice. It is not recorded of him that he was guilty of any personal revenge, nor did he show himself capable of persistent jealousy. It is even likely that, although he remained for several years an enemy of Talleyrand's, it was less because he had reason to complain of him, than because the Emperor took pains to keep up a division between two men whose friendship he thought dangerous to himself; and, indeed, it was when they were reconciled that he began to distrust them both, and to exclude them from affairs.

In 1805 Talleyrand stood much higher in favour than Fouché. The business in hand was to found a monarchy, to impose it upon Europe and upon France by skilful diplomacy, and the pomp of a Court, and the *ci-devant* noble was much fitter to advise upon all these points. He had an immense reputation in Europe. He was known to hold Conservative opinions, and that was all the morality demanded by the foreign sovereigns. The Emperor, in order to inspire confidence in his enterprise, needed to have his signature supported by that of his Minister for Foreign Affairs. So necessary to his projects did he consider this, that he did not grudge the distinction. The agitation which reigned in Europe at the moment when the rupture with Austria and Russia took place, called for very frequent consultations between the Emperor and M. de Talleyrand; and when Bonaparte left Paris to commence the campaign, the Minister established himself at Strasburg, so that he might be able to reach the Emperor when the French cannon should announce that the hour of negotiations had arrived.

About the middle of September, rumours of an approaching departure were spread at Saint Cloud. M. de Rémusat received orders to repair to Strasburg, and there to prepare the Imperial lodgings, and the Empress declared so decidedly her intention of following her husband, that it was settled she

should go to Strasburg with him. A numerous Court was to accompany them. As my husband was going, I should have been very glad to accompany him, but I was becoming more and more of an invalid, and was not in a state to travel. I was therefore obliged to submit to this new separation, a more sorrowful one than the former. This was the first time since I had been at the Court that I had seen the Emperor setting out for the army. The dangers to which he was about to be exposed revived all my former attachment to him. I had not courage to reproach him with anything, when I saw him depart on so serious a mission, and the thought that of many persons who were going, there would no doubt be some whom I should never see again, brought tears to my eyes, and made my heart sink. In the glittering halls of Saint Cloud I saw wives and mothers in terror and anguish, who did not dare to let their grief be seen, so great was the fear of displeasing the Emperor. The officers affected carelessness, but that was the necessary bravado of their profession. At that time, however, there were a great many of them who, having attained a sufficient fortune, and being unable to foresee the almost gigantic height to which the continuity of war was afterwards to raise them, were very sorry to relinquish the pleasant and quiet life which they had now led for some years.

Throughout France the law of the conscription was strictly carried out, and this caused some disturbance in the provinces. The fresh laurels which our army was about to acquire were regarded with indifference. But the soldiers and subalterns were full of hope and ardour, and rushed to the frontiers with eagerness, a presage of success.

On the 20th of September, the following appeared in the *Moniteur*:—

"The Emperor of Germany, without previous negotiation or explanation, and without any declaration of war, has invaded Bavaria. The Elector has retreated to Warzburg, where the whole Bavarian army is assembled."

On the 23rd, the Emperor repaired to the Senate, and issued a decree calling out the reserves of the conscripts of five years' standing. Berthier, the Minister of War, read a report on the impending war, and the Minister of the Interior demonstrated the necessity of employing the National Guard to protect the coasts.

The Emperor's speech was simple and impressive; it was generally approved. Our causes of complaint against Austria were fully set forth in the *Moniteur*. There is little doubt that England, if not afraid, was at least weary of the stay of our troops on the coast, and that it was her policy to raise up enemies for us on the Continent, while the division of the kingdom

of Italy, and still more its union with the French Empire, was sufficiently disquieting to the Austrian Cabinet. Without a knowledge of the diplomatic secrets of the period, which I do not possess, it is hard to understand why the Emperor of Russia broke with us. It is probable that commercial difficulties were making him anxious about his relations with England.

It may be well to quote some words of Napoleon's on this subject. "The Emperor Alexander," he said, "is a young man; he longs for a taste of glory, and, like all children, he wants to go a different way from that which his father followed." Neither can I explain the neutrality of the King of Prussia, which was so advantageous to us, and to himself so fatal, since it did but delay his overthrow for one year. It seems to me that Europe blundered. The Emperor's character should have been better appreciated; and there should have been either a clear understanding that he must be always yielded to, or he should have been put down by general consent at the outset of his career.

But I must return to my narrative, from which I have digressed in order to treat of a subject beyond my powers.

I passed the last few days preceding the Emperor's departure at Saint Cloud. The Emperor worked unremittingly; when over-fatigued, he would

lie down for a few hours in the daytime, but would rise in the middle of the night, and go on with his labours. He was, however, more serene and gracious than at other times; he received company as usual, went occasionally to the theatres, and did not forget, when he was at Strasburg, to send a present to Fleury, the actor, who, two days before his departure, had performed Corneille's "Menteur," by which he had succeeded in amusing the Emperor.

The Empress was as full of confidence as the wife of Bonaparte would naturally be. Happy to be allowed to accompany him and to escape from the talk of Paris, which alarmed her, from the spying of her brothers-in-law, and the monotony of Saint Cloud, delighted with the fresh opportunity for display, she looked on a campaign as on a journey, and maintained composure which, as it could not, by reason of her position, proceed from indifference, was a genuine compliment to him whom she firmly believed fortune would not dare to forsake. Louis Bonaparte, who was in bad health, was to remain in Paris, and had received orders, as had also his wife, to entertain liberally in the absence of the Emperor. Joseph presided over the Administrative Council of the Senate. He resided at the Luxembourg, where he was also to hold a Court. Princess Borghese was recovering her health at Trianon. Madame Murat withdrew to Neuilly,

where she occupied herself in beautifying her charming dwelling; Murat accompanied the Emperor to head-quarters. M. de Talleyrand was to remain at Strasburg until further orders. M. Maret attended the Emperor; he was the author-in-chief of the bulletins.

On the 24th the Emperor set out, and he reached Strasburg without stopping on the way.

I returned in low spirits to Paris, where I rejoined my children, my mother, and my sister. I found her much distressed by her separation from M. de Nansouty, who was in command of a division of cavalry.

Immediately on the departure of the Emperor, rumours of an intended invasion of the coast became rife in Paris, and, in fact, such an expedition might have been attempted; but, fortunately, our enemies were not quite so audacious and enterprising as ourselves, and at that time the English had no such confidence in their army as, since then, it has justly inspired.

The tightening of the money market began almost immediately to be felt: in a short time payment at the Bank was suspended; money fetched a very high price. I heard it said that our export trade did not suffice for our wants—that war had stopped it, and was raising the price of all our imports. This, I was told, was the cause of the sudden embarrassment which had come upon us.

Special and personal anxieties were added to the general depression. Many families of distinction had sons in the army, and trembled for their fate. In what suspense did not parents await the arrival of bulletins which might suddenly apprise them of the loss of those most dear to them! What agonies did not Bonaparte inflict on women, on mothers, during many years! He has sometimes expressed astonishment at the hatred he at last inspired, but could he expect to be forgiven such agonized and prolonged suspense, so much weeping, so many sleepless nights, and days of agonizing dread? If he had but admitted the truth, he must have known there is not one natural feeling on which he had not trampled.

Before his departure, and in order to gratify the nobles, he created what was called the Guard of Honour. He gave the command to his Grand Master of Ceremonies. It was almost funny to see poor M. de Ségur's zeal in forming his Guard, the eagerness displayed by certain great personages to obtain admittance into it, and the anxiety of some of the Chamberlains, who imagined the Emperor would much admire the change of their red coats for a military uniform. I shall never forget the surprise, nay, the fright, which M. de Luçay, Prefect of the Palace, a mild and timid person, gave me, when he asked me whether M. de Rémusat, the father of a family, a former magistrate, and at that time more

than forty years of age, did not also intend to embrace the military career thus suddenly opened to everybody.

We were beginning to be accustomed to so many strange things, that, in spite of sense and reason, I felt some solicitude on this subject, and I wrote to my husband, who replied that he had not been seized with martial ardour, and that he hoped the Emperor might still reckon among his servants some who did not wear swords.

At this time the Emperor had partly restored us to favour. On his departure from Strasburg he confided the entire charge of the Court and the Empress's household to my husband. These were sufficiently easy duties, with no greater drawback than a certain amount of tedium. M. de Talleyrand, who also remained behind at Strasburg, gave some zest to the daily routine of M. de Rémusat's life. They now became really intimate, and were frequently together. M. de Rémusat, who was by nature simple, modest, and retiring, showed to advantage as he became better known, and M. de Talleyrand recognized his intellectual qualities, his excellent judgment, and his uprightness. He began to trust him, to appreciate the safety of intercourse with him, and to treat him as a friend; while my husband, who was gratified by receiving such overtures from a quarter whence he had not expected

them, conceived for him, from that moment, an affection which no subsequent vicissitude has lessened.

Meanwhile the Emperor had left Strasburg. On the 1st of October he commenced the campaign, and the entire army, transported as if by magic from Boulogne, was crossing the frontier. The Elector of Bavaria, on being called upon by the Emperor of Austria to afford free passage to his troops, refused to do so, and was being invaded on every side; but Bonaparte marched to his aid without delay.

We then received the first bulletin from the Grand Army. It announced a first success at Donauwörth, and gave us the proclamations of the Emperor, and that of the Viceroy of Italy. Masséna was ordered to reinforce the latter, and to push into the Tyrol with the united French and Italian armies. To phrases well calculated to inflame the zeal of our soldiers, were added others of biting sarcasm against our enemy. A circular addressed to the inhabitants of Austria, asking for contributions of lint, was published, accompanied by the following note:—"We hope the Emperor of Austria will not require any, as he has gone back to Vienna."

Insults to the Ministers were not spared, nor to some of the great Austrian nobles, among whom was the Count de Colloredo, who was accused of being governed by his wife, herself entirely devoted to English policy. These unworthy attacks occurred

promiscuously in the bulletins, among really elevated sentiments, which although put forth with Roman, rather than with French, eloquence, were very effective.

Bonaparte's activity in this campaign was positively marvellous. From the beginning he foresaw the advantages that would accrue to him from the first blunders of the Austrians, and also his ultimate success. Towards the middle of October he wrote to his wife: "Rest easy; I promise you the shortest and most brilliant of campaigns."

At Wertingen our cavalry obtained some advantage over the enemy, and M. de Nansouty distinguished himself. A brilliant skirmish also took place at Günzburg, and the Austrians were soon retreating from every point.

The army became more and more enthusiastic, and seemed to take no heed of the approach of winter. Just before going into action, the Emperor harangued his soldiers on Lech Bridge, in the midst of thickly falling snow. "But," continued the bulletin, "his words were of fire, and the soldiers forgot their privations." The bulletin ended with these prophetic words: "The destinies of the campaign are fixed." *

* The actual text of the fifth bulletin from the Grand Army is as follows:—"Augsburg, 20th Vendémiaire, year 14 (12th October, 1805). The Emperor was on the Lech Bridge when the division under General Marmont defiled past him. He

The taking of Ulm, and the capitulation of its immense garrison, completed the surprise and terror of Austria, and served to silence the factious spirit in Paris, which had been with difficulty repressed by the police. It is hard to prevent Frenchmen from ranging themselves on the side of glory, and we began to share in that which our army was gaining. But the monetary difficulty was still painfully felt; trade suffered, the theatres were empty, an increase of poverty was perceptible, and the only hope that sustained us was that a campaign so brilliant must be followed by an immediate peace.

After the capitulation of Ulm, the Emperor himself dictated the following phrase in the bulletin:—"The panegyric of the army may be pronounced in two words: it is worthy of its leader."* He wrote to the Senate, sending the colours taken

ordered each regiment to form in circle, and spoke to them of the enemy's position, of the imminence of a great battle, and of his confidence in them. He made this speech in the most severe weather. Snow was falling thick, the troops stood in mud up to their knees, and the cold was intense; but the Emperor's words were of fire, and while listening to him, the soldiers forgot their fatigue and their privations, and were impatient for the moment of battle. Never can great events have been decided in a shorter time. In less than a fortnight the destinies of the campaign, and of the Austrian and Russian armies, will be fixed."—P. R.

* These words are, in fact, to be found in the sixth bulletin from the Grand Army, dated Elchingen, 26th Vendémiaire, year 14 (18th October, 1805).—P. R.

from the enemy, and announcing that the Elector had returned to his capital. Letters from him to the Bishops, requesting them to offer thanksgiving for our victories, were also published.

From the very beginning of the campaign, pastoral letters had been read in every metropolitan church, justifying the war, and encouraging the new recruits to march promptly whithersoever they should be called. The Bishops now began the task once more, and exhausted the Scriptures for texts to prove that the Emperor was protected by the God of armies.*

Joseph Bonaparte was the bearer of his brother's letter to the Senate. That body decreed that, in reply, an address of congratulation should be carried to head-quarters by a certain number of its members.

At Strasburg the Empress received several German Princes, who came to join her Court, and to offer

* The extreme subservience shown by the clergy towards the Emperor was not sufficient in his eyes, if we may judge by the following letter, which he addressed to Fouché during the campaign:—"4th Nivôse, year 14 (25th December, 1805) I perceive some difficulty on the subject of reading out the bulletins in churches; I do not consider this advisable. It would only give more importance to priests than is their due; for it gives them a right of comment, and should the news be bad, they would not fail to remark on it. It is thus, because there are no fixed principles: now there are to be no priests at all, again there are to be too many; all this must come to an end. M. Portalis was wrong to write his letter without knowing my intentions on the subject."—P. R.

her their homage and congratulations. With a natural pride she showed them the Emperor's letters, in which long beforehand he announced to her the victories he was about to gain; and either his skilful foresight must needs be admired, or else the power of a destiny which never for a moment belied itself must be recognized.

Marshal Ney distinguished himself at Elchingen, and the Emperor consented so fully to leave the honours of the occasion to him, that afterwards, when he created dukes, he desired that the Marshal's title should be Duc d'Elchingen.

I use the word *consented*, because it is admitted that Bonaparte was not always perfectly just in apportioning the fame which he accorded to his generals. In one of his occasional fits of frankness, I heard him say that he liked to bestow glory only on those who knew not how to sustain it. According to his policy with respect to the military chiefs under his orders, or the degree of confidence which he placed in them, he would either preserve silence concerning certain victories of theirs, or change the blunder of a particular Marshal into a success. A general would hear through some bulletin of an action which had never taken place, or of a speech which he had never made. Another would find himself famous in the newspapers, and would wonder how he had deserved to be thus dis-

tinguished. Others would endeavour to protest against his neglect of them, or against distorted accounts of events; but how was it possible to correct what had once been read, and was already effaced by more recent news? For Bonaparte's rapidity in war gave us daily something fresh to learn. On these occasions he would either impose silence on the protest, or if he wished to appease the offended officer, a sum of money, a prize from the enemy, or permission to levy a tax, was granted to him, and thus the affair would end.

This crafty spirit, which was inherent in Bonaparte's character, and which he employed adroitly in dealing with his Marshals and superior officers, may be justified, up to a certain point, by the difficulty he occasionally met with in managing so large a number of individuals of widely differing characters but similar aims. He was perfectly cognizant of the scope of their various talents; he knew in what manner each of them might be useful to him: while rewarding their services he was perpetually obliged to repress their pride and jealousy. He was forced to use every means in his power to secure his own success; above all, he could miss no opportunity of making them feel their entire dependence on himself, and that their renown as well as their fortune was in his hands alone.* This point once reached, he

* I find among my father's papers a note which further

might feel certain not to be importuned by them, and to be at liberty to reward their services at his

develops what is said here concerning the Marshals of the Empire:—"The Emperor took the utmost license in composing his bulletins, seeking especially to eclipse all the others, and to establish his own infallibility; then considering the kind of effect he wished to produce on foreigners and on the public in France; and, lastly, having regard to his intentions and his good or ill will towards his lieutenants. Truth came a long way behind all these things. Nothing could equal the surprise of his officers on reading the bulletins which came back to them from Paris; but they made few complaints. The Emperor is, like the Convention and Louis XIV., one of the few powers able to subdue and to discipline the vanity of subordinates.

"The Emperor praised the great generals of his time but little. Military men are more jealous of each other than those of any other profession; they are the least to be relied on in their estimation of each other. They are discouraging or irritating when judging one of another. To this natural jealousy the Emperor added the calculations of a despot who will have no one of importance except himself. Desaix is the only man of whom he spoke with any enthusiasm, and he knew him only at the opening of his career of power. He always continued, I believe, to treat him well, but Desaix died [at Marengo, June 14, 1800]. His comments on his lieutenants, in the beginning of his narrative of the first campaign in Italy, are remarkable, and their severity has no appearance of jealousy. Generally he spoke of the Marshals with a not very flattering freedom. In his correspondence with King Joseph we may read what he said of Masséna, Jourdan, and some others. General Foy told me that he had heard him say of Soult: 'He can array a battle well, but is incapable of fighting one.' Then he would dwell on the exactions, the pretensions, the ambition, and the cupidity of his Marshals. 'No one knows,' he said to M. Pasquier, 'what it is to have to deal with two such men as Soult and Ney.' His

own price. In general, however, the Marshals have had no cause to complain that he did not rate them highly. The rewards obtained by them were frequently gigantic; and the long continuance of war having raised their hopes to the highest pitch, we have seen them become dukes and princes with-

lieutenants frequently paid him back, in their conversations, what he had said concerning them. It was not in the army, especially during the campaigns that followed that of Austrelitz, that he was chiefly held in admiration, esteem, and affection. He had, as it were, an off-hand way of making war. He neglected many things, and risked many. He sacrificed everything to his personal success. Becoming more and more confident in his destiny, and in the terror inspired by his presence, his only thought was to repair any blunders, checks, or losses, by decisive blows struck with his own hand. He was always resolute in denying or in preserving silence concerning anything which might injure him. This rendered the service unbearable to those generals who were at a distance from himself. They retained all their responsibility, were often without the necessary means of action and received only orders impossible to execute, and which were intended to put them in the wrong. They accused him, consequently, of selfishness, of injustice, of perfidy, and even of malice towards them, or of envy. Barante has told me that when the auditors arrived at the army, they were confounded at what they heard said among the staff, and sometimes even at head-quarters. He himself, when attached to the staff of Marshal Lannes—during the campaign of Poland, I believe—heard him frequently say, at his own table, that the Emperor, being jealous of him and eager to ruin him, gave him orders with this end in view; and once, when suffering from internal pain, he went so far as to say the Emperor had tried to have him poisoned." I have quoted the whole of the above interesting passage; but it is evident that all this was in embryo at the time of the campaign of 1805.—P. R.

out being astonished at the fact, and come to think that royalty alone could worthily crown their destiny. Enormous sums were divided among them, and every kind of exaction from the vanquished was permitted them; some of them made immense fortunes, and if most of these disappeared with the Government under which they were amassed, it was because they had been acquired so easily that their upstart possessors naturally spent them lavishly, feeling confident that the facilities for making such fortunes would never be exhausted.

In this first campaign of Napoleon's reign, although the army was as yet subject to a discipline which was afterwards considerably relaxed, the vanquished people found themselves a prey to the rapacity of the conqueror, and the obligation of receiving some field officer for a single night, or even for a few hours, cost many a great Austrian noble or prince the entire destruction and pillage of his home. The common soldiers were under discipline, and there was an outward appearance of order, but there was nothing to hinder a Marshal from taking away with him, on his departure, any objects which had caught his fancy. After the close of the war, I have often heard the wife of Marshal X—— relate, with laughter, that her husband, knowing her taste for music, had sent her an immense collection of music-books, which he had

found in some German prince's house; and she would add, with equal ingenuousness, that he had despatched so many packing-cases full of lustres and Venice glass, which he had picked up in every direction, to their house in Paris, that she was quite at a loss to know where to put them.

While the Emperor knew so well how to hold the pretensions of his generals in check, he spared no pains to encourage and satisfy the soldiers. After the taking of Ulm, a decree was issued to the effect that the month of Vendémiaire, which was just closed, should in itself be reckoned as a campaign.

On the feast of All Saints, a solemn *Te Deum* was sung at Notre Dame, and Joseph gave several entertainments in honour of our victories.

Meanwhile Masséna was distinguishing himself by victories in Italy, and it soon became certain that the Emperor of Austria would have to pay dearly for this great campaign. The Russian army was hastening by forced marches to his aid, but had not yet joined the Austrians, who meanwhile were being defeated by our Emperor. It was said, at the time, that the Emperor Francis made a blunder by entering upon the war before the Emperor Alexander was in a position to help him.

During this campaign, Bonaparte induced the King of Naples to remain neutral, and agreed to rid him of the French garrison, which he had hitherto

been obliged to maintain. Several decrees relating to the administration of France were promulgated from various head-quarters, and the former Doge of Genoa was created a senator.

The Emperor liked to appear to be engaged in a number of different affairs at once, and to show that he could cast what he called "an eagle glance" in every direction at the same instant. For this reason, and also on account of his suspicious disposition, he wrote a letter to the Minister of Police, desiring him to keep a watchful eye on the Faubourg St. Germain, meaning those members of the French nobility who remained opposed to him, and stating that he had been informed of certain things that had been said against him in his absence, and would punish them on his return.

It was Fouché's habit, on receiving such orders as these, to send for the persons, both men and women, who were more specially accused. Whether he really thought the Emperor's displeasure was excited by mere trifles, and that, as he sometimes used to say, it was foolish to prevent French people from talking, or whether he desired to win golden opinions by his own moderation, after advising those persons for whom he had sent to be more cautious, he would conclude by admitting that the Emperor made too much ado about trivialities. Thus, by degrees, he acquired a reputation for justice and moderation,

which did away with the first impressions of his character. The Emperor, who was informed of this conduct on his part, resented it, and was secretly on his guard against one so careful to conciliate all parties.

On the 12th of November, our victorious army entered the gates of Vienna. The newspapers gave full details of the circumstances, and these accounts acquire additional interest from the fact that they were all dictated by Bonaparte, and that he frequently took upon himself to invent, as an after-thought, circumstances or anecdotes likely to strike the popular imagination.

"The Emperor," says the bulletin, "has taken up his abode in the Palace of Schönbrunn; he writes in a cabinet in which stands a statue of Maria Theresa. On observing this, he exclaimed, 'Ah! if that great queen was still living, she would not allow herself to be led by such a woman as Madame de Colloredo! Surrounded by her nobles, she would have ascertained the wishes of her people. She would never have allowed her provinces to be ravaged by the Muscovites,'" etc.*

Meanwhile, some bad news came to temper Bonaparte's success. Admiral Nelson had just beaten our fleet at Trafalgar. The French navy fought with splendid bravery, but were disastrously defeated.

* The whole of this lengthy effusion may be read in the *Moniteur*.

This produced a bad effect in Paris, and disgusted the Emperor for ever with naval enterprises. He became so deeply prejudiced against the French navy, that from that time it was scarcely possible to induce him to take any interest or pay any attention to the subject. Vainly did the sailors or soldiers who had distinguished themselves on that fatal day, endeavour to obtain recognition or sympathy for the dangers they had encountered: they were practically forbidden even to revert to the disaster; and when, in after years, they wanted to obtain any favour, they took care not to claim it on the score of the admirable courage to which the English despatches only rendered justice. Immediately on the Emperor's return to Vienna, he sent for M. de Talleyrand, perceiving that the time for negotiations was at hand, and that the Emperor of Austria was about to treat for peace.

It is probable that our Emperor had already decided on making the Elector of Bavaria a King, on enlarging his dominions, and also on the marriage of Prince Eugène.

M. de Rémusat was sent to Paris in order that he might convey the Imperial insignia and the Crown diamonds to Vienna. I saw him but for an instant, and learned with fresh vexation that he was about to leave for a still more distant country. On his return to Strasburg he received orders to pro-

ceed at once to Vienna, and the Empress was directed to repair to Munich with the whole Court. Nothing could exceed the honours rendered to her in Germany; Princes and Electors crowded to welcome her, and the Elector of Bavaria, especially, neglected nothing to make her reception all that could be desired. She remained at Munich, waiting for her husband's return.

M. de Rémusat, while on his journey, reflected sadly upon the condition of the countries through which he passed. The land still reeked of battle. Devastated villages, roads encumbered with corpses and ruins, brought before his eyes all the horrors of war. The distress of the vanquished added an element of danger to the discomfort of this journey so late in the season. Everything contributed painfully to impress the imagination of a man who was a friend to humanity, and who lamented the disasters which result from the passions of conquerors. My husband's letters, full of painful reflections, grieved me deeply, and served to lessen the enthusiasm which had been beginning to revive as I read accounts of victories, in which the bright side only was shown to the public.

When M. de Rémusat reached Vienna, the Emperor was no longer there. The negotiations had lasted but a short time, and our army was marching forward. M. de Talleyrand and M.

Maret remained at Schönbrunn, where they both lived, but without intimacy.

M. Maret's familiarity with the Emperor gave him a sort of influence, which he kept up, as I have already said, by adoration, true or feigned, and displayed in all his words and actions. M. de Talleyrand would make fun of this sometimes, and quiz the Secretary of State, who resented such conduct excessively. He was therefore always on his guard against M. de Talleyrand, and disliked him sincerely.

M. de Talleyrand, who was thoroughly weary of Vienna, greeted M. de Rémusat, on his arrival, with great cordiality, and the intimacy between them increased during the idle life both were leading. It is very likely that M. Maret, who wrote regularly to the Emperor, reported upon this new friendship, and that it was displeasing to a person always prone to take offence, and apt to detect ulterior motives in the most unimportant actions of life.

M. de Talleyrand, finding scarcely any one but M. de Rémusat who could understand him, disclosed to him the political views with which the victories of our armies inspired him. He warmly desired to consolidate the peace of Europe, and his great fear was that the glamour of victory, and the predilections of the military men surrounding the Emperor, all of them having again become accustomed to war,

would induce the latter to prolong it. "When the moment comes for actually concluding peace," he said, "you will see that the greatest difficulty I shall have will be in treating with the Emperor himself, and it will take much talking to sober the intoxication produced by gunpowder." In these moments of confidence, M. de Talleyrand would speak candidly of the Emperor. While he admitted the great defects of his character, he believed him to be destined to end the Revolution in France irrevocably and to found a lasting Government; and he also believed that he himself should be able to rule the Emperor's conduct with regard to Europe. "If I fail to persuade him," he said, "I shall, at any rate, know how to fetter him in spite of himself, and to force him to take some repose."

M. de Rémusat was delighted to find an able statesman, and one who enjoyed the confidence of the Emperor, full of projects so wise in themselves, and he began to regard him with the esteem that every French citizen owes to a man who endeavours to control the effects of a boundless ambition. He often wrote to me that he was delighted with the discoveries which his intimacy with M. de Talleyrand enabled him to make, and I began to feel interest in one who alleviated the wearisome exile of my husband.

In my hours of solitude and anxiety, my husband's

letters were my only pleasure and the sole charm of my existence. Although he prudently avoided details, I could see that he was satisfied with his position. He would describe to me the different sights he had seen. He would tell me of his drives or walks in Vienna, which he described as a large and beautiful city, and of his visits to certain important personages who had remained there, as well as to other families. He was struck by their extreme attachment to the Emperor Francis. These good people of Vienna, although their city was conquered, did not hesitate openly to express their hopes of a speedy return to the paternal rule of their master, and, while they sympathized with him in his reverses, they never uttered a single reproach.

Good order was maintained in Vienna; the garrison was under strict discipline, and the inhabitants had no great cause of complaint against their conquerors. The French entered into some of the amusements of the place; they frequented the theatres, and it was at Vienna that M. de Rémusat first heard the celebrated Italian singer Crescentini, and subsequently engaged him for the Emperor's "Musical Service."

END OF VOL. I.

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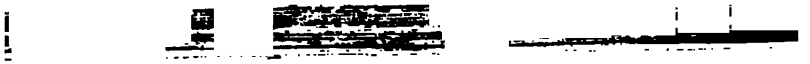

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